



**GolfAustralia**

**GA**

**Handicap**

**System**

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**NOTE: All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed in the Definitions section (Section 4).**

## 1. First Principles of the *GA Handicap System*

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The *GA Handicap System* should achieve each of the following:

- (i) Be primarily tailored for *competition* golf and afford each player in the field a reasonable prospect of winning or placing well if that player plays reasonably better than their handicap.
- (ii) A player's handicap should be reflective of their better performances and should not increase substantially due to a temporary loss of form.
- (iii) The calculation of a handicap should take into account the degree of difficulty presented at the time by the playing conditions.
- (iv) The calculation of a handicap should be sufficiently flexible to be consistently calculated irrespective of the mix of handicaps held by players on a *course* on any given day.
- (v) The handicap system should have the confidence of the Australian golf community and should not place an unreasonable burden on any club in order for proper administration to be achieved.

## 2. General

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- (i) This *GA Handicap System* is the official *GA* regulatory code governing women's handicapping in Australia AND men's handicapping in Australia. Whilst it provides a single methodology for both women's handicapping and men's handicapping, it does not provide for single-gender handicaps. The *GA Handicap System* requires that women's handicaps determined under this System be determined in accordance with women's scores and standards, and that men's handicaps determined under this System be determined in accordance with men's scores and standards.
- (ii) The System is based on the assumption that every player will endeavour to make the best score they can at each hole in every round they play and that they will report every *Eligible Score* (as determined by Section 10) to their *Home Club's Handicapping Authority*, regardless of where the round was played. Players who fail to meet this requirement are effectively operating outside the System and, at the discretion of their club's *Handicapping Authority*, may have their *GA Handicap* re-assessed or withdrawn.
- (iii) *GA* delegates to its *Member Associations* the power to administer on its behalf the handicapping of all players who are members of clubs affiliated with such Associations. Any disputes shall be referred to *GA* whose decision shall be final and binding. An interpretation of a regulation contained within this System, or a decision in relation to this System, which is supplied in writing by *GA* will be deemed to have full authority under this System and will supersede any alternate position which may exist on the same point.
- (iv) Any handicap administered by an affiliated Australian golf club, and calculated in accordance with this System, is owned by *GA*.
- (v) Essential points of the System are that:
  - All handicaps shall be calculated in accordance with this System.
  - All handicaps referred to in this System are stroke handicaps.
  - All handicaps calculated in accordance (or fundamentally in accordance) with the *GA Handicap System* are owned by *GA*. Use by a golfer of a handicap calculated in accordance (or fundamentally in accordance) with the *GA Handicap System* is only permitted under licence granted by *GA* to the player as an extension of their golf club's affiliation privileges, or as otherwise by permitted by *GA*. Such licence may be revoked or suspended under Section 15 of this system, and otherwise in circumstances considered by *GA* to be exceptional.
  - There be uniform determination of the course rating of golf *courses* in Australia.
  - The *GA Handicap System* be properly applied.
  - The settings of the System must operate such that it adequately caters for net events regardless of field size.
  - In certain situations discussed in Section 15 of this System a *GA Handicap* may be adjusted other than in accordance with the formulas described within this System.
  - *GA's* principal objective in issuing handicaps is to provide all competitors in a net competition with an equal chance of achieving success. Net competitions by their nature should see a mix of all players enjoying various levels of success – specific players should not regularly perform at a level that is clearly superior to average net performance levels. The *GA* website provides expected performance standards for players of each level of handicap – [www.golf.org.au/handicapping-reports](http://www.golf.org.au/handicapping-reports). Should a club identify that one of its members is exhibiting regularity of performances in official net stroke play competitions (including Stableford and Par) or net match play competitions that are clearly superior (either in terms of wins, or in terms of other very good results) to the performances of a typical player, then *GA* will consider that the standard handicap system algorithms are failing to

determine a handicap that meets the principal objective of the *GA Handicap System*. In such cases the club will be obliged by the *GA Handicap System* to review the player's *GA Handicap*. Section 15 of the *GA Handicap System* sets out the steps a club needs to follow to make a decision to amend a member's *GA Handicap*. (Note: Where applicable, clubs should also be aware of Section 16 – 'Manual Bonus Reduction for Exceptional Net Score'.)

### 3. Types of Official GA Handicap & Types of Handicap Status

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#### (i) *GA Handicaps and Daily Handicaps*

There are two types of official handicap allocated under this System; a *GA Handicap* and a *Daily Handicap*. The *GA Handicap* is not designed for use in handicap *competition* play; rather it is *GA's* assessment of the relative golfing ability of a player on a *course* with a *neutral Slope Rating*. The *Daily Handicap* is the handicap to be used in handicap *competition* play. The *GA Handicap* is one of the factors used in the calculation of the *Daily Handicap*.

#### (ii) *Handicaps for Men and Handicaps for Women*

Only a female may hold a *Women's GA Handicap* or a *Women's Daily Handicap*. Only a male may hold a *Men's GA Handicap* or a *Men's Daily Handicap*. Where the term *GA Handicap* is used in the *GA Handicap System*, it is deemed to mean either *Women's GA Handicap* or *Men's GA Handicap* or both, as the appropriate context determines. Where the term *Daily Handicap* is used in the *GA Handicap System*, it is deemed to mean either *Women's Daily Handicap* or *Men's Daily Handicap* or both, as the appropriate context determines.

Note: The *GA Handicap System* requires that women's handicaps determined under this System be determined in accordance with women's scores and standards, and that men's handicaps determined under this System be determined in accordance with men's scores and standards.

#### (iii) *Professional Golfers*

Whilst a professional golfer, or a player awaiting reinstatement to Amateur Status, may hold a *GA Handicap* if they meet the various eligibility criteria (see Section 6(iv) and 13(iii)), a committee is permitted to have a condition restricting entry to any (or all) event(s) it controls to Amateurs only (or to Professionals only). (Exception: Players awaiting reinstatement to Amateur Status (or players who are not Amateur Golfers) after having lost their Amateur Status by virtue of accepting a prize of excessive value for performance in a handicap competition in violation of Amateur Status Rule 3-2a, or who played for prize money in a handicap competition in violation of Amateur Status Rule 3-1, are not eligible to hold a *GA Handicap*.)

#### (iv) *Types of Handicap Status*

There are six different types of status that may apply to a *GA Handicap*. Only one status will apply to a *GA Handicap* at any given time. The six different types of status are as follows:

- "*Unallocated*" (see Definition of *Unallocated GA Handicap*).
- "*Normal*" (see Definition of *Normal GA Handicap*).
- "*Frozen*" (see Definition of *Frozen GA Handicap*).
- "*Provisional*" (see Definition of *Provisional GA Handicap*).
- "*Suspended*" (see Definition of *Suspended GA Handicap*).
- "*Lapsed*" (see Definition of *Lapsed GA Handicap*).

## 4. Definitions

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The Definitions are listed alphabetically and, in the regulations themselves, defined terms are in *italics*.

#### **Actual Score**

An *Actual Score* is a score that is to be considered when determining a player's most recent 20 scores. (See Section 12(ix) for details of which scores are *Actual Scores* and which scores are not *Actual Scores*.)

#### **Batch**

'*Batch*' is a term that is used for *DSR* calculation purposes. It is the full set of scores made on a single day and in a given *competition* round, or the full set of *Conforming Social Scores* made on a single day by a given group of players. (The *Handicapping Authority* is authorised to amend the composition for *DSR* calculation purposes of such a group at any time prior to the processing of the *Batch* in GOLF Link.)

A *Batch* of scores must comprise scores returned by players of the same gender, and who have played from the same tees, and who have returned scores of the same type (ie Stableford, Stroke, or Par), and who have GOLF Link numbers.

Handicap administrators have an option available to them in GOLF Link or their Tier 3 system which enables them when processing a *Batch* of scores to split a single *Batch* into two Sub-Batches. A club should split a *Batch* into two Sub-Batches when for example the conditions altered significantly during the day on which the scores were made (or when it is normal for conditions at that club to alter significantly during a day). In such a case, an AM Sub-Batch and a PM Sub-Batch will be created. If for example a *Batch* of *competition* scores is split into two Sub-Batches, a separate *DSR* will be calculated for each Sub-Batch even though all players have competed in the one *competition*.

When processing scores through GOLF Link, the *Handicapping Authority* should link selected *Batches* of scores returned at its club on a single day if it deems that the players in the different *Batches* have not encountered conditions that are significantly different. (The linking of different *Batches* of scores is a different action to combining all scores into one *Batch* before submission to GOLF Link. For example, if a *Batch* of women's *competition* scores is linked to a *Batch* of men's *competition* scores, GOLF Link will combine the scores for the purposes of *DSR* calculation, however it will return the scores to the club neatly packaged back into their separate men's and women's *Batches*.) Where selected *Batches* of scores are linked for this purpose, a separate *DSR* will be calculated for each *Batch*, however all *DSRs* will differ from the respective *Scratch Ratings* by the same amount (unless they are calculated to have the same values as the respective *Scratch Ratings*).

### **Bona-fide Body**

A *Bona-fide Body* is a formally constituted club, association or group formed primarily for the purpose of conducting ongoing golf events, played in accordance with the Rules of Golf and appropriate local rules, or otherwise to administer golf for a defined area or group of golfers.

### **Cap**

The *Cap* regulation is designed to eliminate the capacity for extreme outward movements of a *GA Handicap* within short spaces of time. As a result, a loss of form does not cause a player's *GA Handicap* to move too far from a level which is consistent with their underlying ability. The *Cap* also makes the *GA Handicap System* less susceptible to manipulation. (See Section 12(ii) for full details of the *Cap* regulation.)

### **Cap Point**

A player's *Cap Point* is the best/lowest *GA Handicap* from the 12-month period extending back in time from the round that resulted in their most recent *Actual Score*. (The *GA Handicap* that results from the processing of the most recent round is eligible to count as the *Cap Point*.) (See Section 12(ii) for full details.)

### **Competition**

A *Competition* will be deemed to have been held when it has been conducted as follows:

- In accordance with the current Rules of Golf as approved by R&A Rules Limited.
- By a recognised golf club, its professional or agent, or other *bona-fide body*.
- Where trophies or prizes are awarded for golfing performance.
- Where scores are *Eligible Scores* as determined by this System.

Note i: A *Handicapping Authority* may determine to hold a *Competition* for which trophies or prizes are not awarded.

Note ii: There is nothing in this System, or in any other *GA* regulatory code, to prevent a club from requiring the payment of an entry fee as a condition of eligibility for a *Competition*.

### **Competition Score**

The *Competition Score* is the score that is used to determine the player's final position within a *competition* field. The *Handicapping Score* is the score that is used in the administration of the player's handicap. For example, a player has scored 40 points for their first 16 holes at which stage the *course* is considered to be unplayable due to darkness. The player correctly returns their score card in accordance with the Rules of Golf. The player's *Handicapping Score* is 44 points (see Section 10(vi)), and their *Competition Score* is 40 points. Decision 9 in Section 19 explains how this round is entered into GOLF Link.

### **Conforming Social Score**

A *Conforming Social Score* will be deemed to have been made when the following has occurred:

- The player's *Home Club* has determined to accept *Conforming Social Scores* for handicapping. (Note: *GA* encourages the handicapping of these scores, provided it does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club.)
- The round has been played in accordance with the current Rules of Golf as approved by R&A Rules Limited.
- A score card attested by a *Marker* as defined within this System has been submitted to the *Handicapping Authority* or its representative. The *Marker* must have accompanied the player for all of the holes for which they are attesting scores.

- The score format must be singles Stableford.
- The player has nominated prior to playing a stroke on their first hole to be played that the score is to count for handicapping purposes and the number of holes they will play. If the round is played at the player's *Home Club*, or is being controlled by the player's *Home Club*, such nomination must be in accordance with the requirements of the *Handicapping Authority* of the player's *Home Club*.
- If the round is not played at the player's *Home Club* and is not being controlled by the player's *Home Club*, such nomination must be in accordance with a procedure that is acceptable to the player's *Home Club*.

Note i: There is nothing in this System, or in any other *GA* regulatory code, which prevents a *Handicapping Authority* from deeming specific individuals, or specific groups of individuals, or individuals who hold specific categories of membership, ineligible to return *Conforming Social Scores*.

Note ii: There is nothing in this System, or in any other *GA* regulatory code, which prevents a *Handicapping Authority* from limiting the number of *Conforming Social Scores* a member (or specific members) may return within a given period of time, or from making rounds played away from the *Home Club* ineligible for consideration as *Conforming Social Scores*.

Note iii: There is nothing in this System, or in any other *GA* regulatory code, to prevent a club from requiring the payment of a fee as an additional eligibility criteria for a *Conforming Social Score*.

Note iv: *Conforming Social Scores* will be processed for handicapping and will be treated by this System in the same manner as scores returned in *Competitions* (this includes instances where a player has pre-nominated that their score is to count for handicapping purposes and where the player does not return a score card in accordance with the requirements of the Rules of Golf, or plays less than the pre-nominated number of holes – see Section 19).

Note v: A *Stipulated Round* of less than 18 holes is eligible to serve as a *Conforming Social Score* at the discretion of the *Handicapping Authority* of the player's *Home Club*.

### Course

In this System, the term *Course* is used to mean a playing option at a golf facility that has been provided its own *Scratch Rating*. In addition to a *Scratch Rating*, each *Course* will also be provided its own *Slope Rating*. The starting point on each hole of a *Course* is designated by a distinctive set of permanent rating markers.

An 18-hole configuration at a facility will have multiple *Courses*. Facility managers will install different permanent rating markers for each *Course*. For example, permanent rating markers for the women's major *competition Course* at a facility will typically be red, and the permanent rating markers for the men's major *competition Course* at a facility will typically be blue.

Facility managers should consider establishing multiple playing options to cater for different types of player and different types of play. Facility managers should consider ensuring each of the following categories of play is adequately catered for (note: in some cases, one *Course* will cater for more than one of the below categories):

- *Competition* men's play.
- *Competition* women's play.
- Regular men's play.
- Regular women's play.
- Veteran men's play.
- Veteran women's play.
- Beginner men's play.
- Beginner women's play.

### Daily Handicap

A *Daily Handicap* is the number of strokes a player receives for play at the *course* being played. The *Daily Handicap* is expressed as a whole number. (Note: The *GA Handicap* is not designed for use in handicap *competition* play; rather it is one of the factors used in the calculation of the *Daily Handicap*. The *Daily Handicap* is the handicap to be used in handicap *competition* play.) (The formula for determination of a *Daily Handicap* is listed in Section 12(iii)(B).)

**Daily Scratch Rating (DSR)**

The *Daily Scratch Rating (DSR)* is a value that is determined in accordance with this System. The value will be determined as a whole number. It is the *Scratch Rating* of a *course* adjusted to account for variations experienced on a given day to the conditions which are normally experienced at that *course*. A *DSR* will be determined for each day on which a score is processed for handicapping purposes (unless the only scores processed on the day are scores listed in Section 8(ii)(B)(II-III)). If in the opinion of the *Handicapping Authority*, the conditions alter significantly during a day on which scores are being processed for handicapping purposes, it should segregate the field and determine two *DSRs* for that field.

**Differential**

The *Differential* is the value that is featured in the 'Sloped Played To' column of a player's handicap record on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au). It is the best 8 of the player's most recent 20 *Differentials* that are directly used in the calculation of the player's *GA Handicap*. The player's *Differential* for a round is provided as a number calculated to one decimal place. Its primary purpose is to serve as a direct representation of the handicap the player 'Sloped Played To' for that round (as opposed to the handicap they 'played off'). It is a value that is determined in accordance with this System – see Section 12(i).

**Eligible Score**

*Eligible Scores* are those scores detailed in Section 10.

**Estimate Score**

An *Estimate Score* is not a score the player has returned; it is a score the *Home Club* estimates is consistent with the player's current level of play.

**Frozen GA Handicap**

A *Frozen GA Handicap* is a *GA Handicap* that is not permitted to increase beyond a specific value for a stipulated period of time in accordance with Section 15.

**GA Handicap**

A *GA Handicap* is *GA's* assessment of the relative golfing ability of a player on a *course* with a *neutral Slope Rating*. It is expressed as a number taken to one decimal place and is determined in accordance with the *GA Handicap System*. The *GA Handicap* is not designed for use in handicap *competition* play; rather it is one of the factors used in the calculation of the *Daily Handicap*. The *Daily Handicap* is the handicap to be used in handicap *competition* play.

**GA Handicap System**

The *GA Handicap System* is *GA's* method of evaluating golfing abilities so that each player in a handicap event (whether it be a formal *competition* or socially) has a reasonable prospect of winning or placing well if they play reasonably better than their handicap.

Any reference to the *GA Handicap System* includes all of the requirements and procedures as described in this System.

**Golf Australia (GA)**

*Golf Australia (GA)* is the governing authority for handicapping in Australia.

**Handicapping Authority**

The *Handicapping Authority* is an individual or committee or group that is permitted by a club or other appropriate entity to exercise the authority granted to that club or entity by this System.

**Handicapping Score**

The *Handicapping Score* is the score that is used in the administration of the player's handicap. The *Competition Score* is the score that is used to determine the player's final position within a competition field. For example, a player has scored 40 points for their first 16 holes at which stage the *course* is considered to be unplayable due to darkness. The player correctly returns their score card in accordance with the Rules of Golf. The player's *Handicapping Score* is 44 points (see Section 10(vi)), and their *Competition Score* is 40 points. Decision 9 in Section 19 explains how this round is entered into GOLF Link.

**Home Club**

The *Home Club* is the body as nominated by the player which has primary responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of a player's handicap.

**Lapsed GA Handicap**

A player's *GA Handicap* is considered to be "*Lapsed*" if they are not a current member of an affiliated body and if they have a GOLF Link record which contains more than two 18-hole *Differentials*, and when none of the other five handicap status options apply (an 18-hole *Differential* created from the combination of two 9-hole *Differentials* will be considered to be an 18-hole *Differential* for this purpose).

**Live Score**

A score is a *Live Score* if it is one of the player's most recent 20 *Actual Scores*. (If the player's handicap record contains less than 20 *Actual Scores*, all *Actual Scores* are *Live Scores*.)

**Marker**

The *Marker* is a member of any golf club or golf association recognised by *GA*, or a person otherwise approved by the club's *Handicapping Authority*. They are appointed to mark the score card in accordance with the Rules of Golf of a player who is returning a score for handicapping purposes.

**Member Associations**

The *Member Associations* are the associations that are members of *GA*. In addition to any other members who may be added from time to time, the *Member Associations* of *GA* are:

- Golf New South Wales
- Golf Northern Territory
- Golf Queensland
- Golf South Australia
- Golf Tasmania
- Golf Victoria
- Golf Western Australia

**Multiplier**

The *Multiplier* is a component of the *GA Handicap* calculation formula. It is a balancing factor designed to offset the impact of players on different handicap levels exhibiting different standard deviations of net scores. Its ultimate objective is to help to achieve national results patterns for net competitions that are as equitable as possible. It is a numeric value (0.93). The average of the *Differentials* to be used in the calculation of a player's handicap is multiplied by this value (0.93) in the calculation of the player's *GA Handicap*. (See Section 12(ii) for details.)

**Neutral Slope Rating**

The *neutral Slope Rating* is 113. A player's *Daily Handicap* on a course with a *neutral Slope Rating* will be their rounded *GA Handicap*.

**Normal GA Handicap**

This is the default status for a *GA Handicap*. It applies when the player's GOLF Link record contains more than two 18-hole *Differentials*, and when none of the other five handicap status options apply (an 18-hole *Differential* created from the combination of two 9-hole *Differentials* will be considered to be an 18-hole *Differential* for this purpose).

**Provisional GA Handicap**

A handicap will lose its full status in the event that a player should accrue in their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* five or more entries with a status of 'No Score – Not Approved' (note: full status is automatically regained upon the number of 'No Score – Not Approved' entries in the player's most recent 20 *Actual Scores* decreasing to four or less). Such a handicap will be known as a "*Provisional GA Handicap*". *GA* recommends that players with *Provisional GA Handicaps* will not be eligible to win prizes in competitions which have as a condition of entry a requirement that competitors hold *GA Handicaps*.

**Scratch Rating**

A *Scratch Rating* for women is the evaluation of the normal playing difficulty of a course for a player with a women's handicap of zero. A *Scratch Rating* for men is the evaluation of the normal playing difficulty of a course for a player with a men's handicap of zero. Where the term *Scratch Rating* is used within the *GA Handicap System*, it is deemed to mean either a women's *Scratch Rating* or a men's *Scratch Rating* as the appropriate context determines. The assessment of *Scratch Ratings* is based on the USGA Course Rating System. *Scratch Ratings* are assessed to one decimal place based on distance and other obstacles to the extent they affect the scoring ability of the player with a handicap of zero. Before use in any calculation performed under the *GA Handicap System*, an 18-hole *Scratch Rating* is rounded to the nearest whole number (with .5 being rounded to the next higher whole number). Note: 9-hole *Scratch Ratings* will increase in increments of .5 (.3-.7 inclusive rounds to .5, .8-.2 inclusive rounds to .0).

**Slope Rating**

*Slope Rating* is the designation that indicates the relative playing difficulty of a course for players who are not scratch golfers (ie players who do not have a *GA Handicap* of 0) relative to the *Scratch Rating* of a course. A golf course of neutral playing difficulty has a *Slope Rating* of 113. The maximum *Slope Rating* is 155. The minimum *Slope Rating* is 55. The assessment of *Slope Ratings* is based on the USGA Course Rating System.



**Special Competition Handicap**

A *Special Competition Handicap* is a handicap allocated to a player by the committee in charge of a competition for use in a specific competition (or specific competitions) of which that committee has control. It must be allocated in accordance with Section 17 of this System. It will be used by the player in lieu of the *Daily Handicap* calculated from their *GA Handicap*. A *Special Competition Handicap* is allocated to a player when for whatever reason the committee in charge of the competition deems to be inappropriate the *Daily Handicap* that would be calculated from their *GA Handicap*.

**Stableford Handicapping Adjustment (SHA)**

For handicapping, all *eligible scores* must be adjusted to, and processed as, Stableford scores. (See Section 9 for details.)

**Stipulated Round**

The number of holes in a *stipulated round* is 18 unless a smaller number is authorised by the committee. (Rules of Golf – refer to definitions.)

**Suspended GA Handicap**

A *Suspended GA Handicap* is a *GA Handicap* that has been rendered completely inactive for a stipulated period of time (or a stipulated minimum period of time) in accordance with Section 15.

**Tee Up**

*Tee Up* is the term used to describe a local rule which, if in operation, permits a player to lift their ball in play, clean it, and place it on a tee for the play of their next stroke (note: the committee must specify the areas on the *course* where the ball must initially lie in order for a player to invoke this local rule, eg on fairways only).

**Unallocated GA Handicap**

A player's *GA Handicap* status is "Unallocated" when they have a GOLF Link record which contains less than three 18-hole *Differentials*, and when none of the other five handicap status options apply (an 18-hole *Differential* created from the combination of two 9-hole *Differentials* will be considered to be an 18-hole *Differential* for this purpose).

**United States Golf Association (USGA)**

The *USGA* is the owner and author of the USGA Course Rating System. All affiliated *courses* in Australia will be rated in accordance with the USGA Course Rating System. The *GA Handicap System* uses the USGA Course Rating System, Slope and Standard *Slope Rating* and formulas as an integral component of its handicap calculation process. The USGA Course Rating System and the Slope component of the *GA Handicap System* are used in Australia and by *GA* only under licence granted to *GA* by the *USGA*.

## 5. The Player

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- (i) A player shall have one *GA Handicap* only and this shall be managed by their *Home Club*.
- (ii) If a player is, or becomes, a member of more than one club, they shall select one club as their *Home Club* (for handicapping purposes only) and shall report to this club their decision and the names of their other club or clubs. They shall also report to their other clubs the name of their *Home Club*, their *GA Handicap*, and any alterations that may be made to their *GA Handicap* from time to time (unless all their clubs are on GOLF Link). If a player ceases to be a member of another club, they shall report the fact to their *Home Club* so that it at all times has a record of all clubs of which they are a member.
- (iii) The player is responsible for ensuring that all of their *Eligible Scores*, including those made at clubs other than their *Home Club*, are displayed on GOLF Link.
- (iv) It is desirable that the player, when playing at a visited club, carries their GOLF Link card, or an introductory card that lists their current *GA Handicap*.
- (v) A player is responsible for using their correct handicap at all times (see also Section 12(viii)).
- (vi) By using a handicap allocated under this System, the player acknowledges that certain information may be made publicly available on a *GA* authorised webpage (including a club, *Member Association*, or GOLF Link webpage) for the purposes of administering the System. The information that may be displayed (at the discretion of *GA*) includes the player's:
  - Name.
  - GOLF Link number.
  - Club name.
  - Information relevant to their scoring and handicapping history.

- Any determination made by a club, *Member Association* or *GA* (or made under a review of such decision) to adjust, freeze or suspend a *GA Handicap*, or to suspend or terminate a player's membership of any golf club.

Note: *GA* will be bound by all relevant privacy legislation. Any request to remove such information from a *GA* authorised website must be made in writing and will be considered by the website owner or *GA*.

- (vii) By using a handicap allocated under this System, the player agrees to be bound by the *GA Handicap System*.

## 6. The Home Club

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- (i) An essential element of the *GA Handicap System* is that each affiliated club will ensure it is properly administered in accordance with the interpretations of *GA*. It is for each club to establish and maintain its own procedures for ensuring it properly administers the *GA Handicap System*.
- (ii) The duties, responsibilities, and authorities of each club are as follows (note: as a club does not always have complete control of the *course* or *courses* on which its members play, it should conform with the following to the extent that its authority permits):
  - (A) Responsible for ensuring compliance by the golf club with all aspects of the *GA Handicap System*, including the determination of each member's *GA Handicap*.
  - (B) Responsible for ensuring the set-up of its *course* (or *courses*) complies with the requirement to maintain the rated length (see Section 10(x)).
  - (C) Responsible for verifying that all required *Eligible Scores* made by their members are reported for handicap purposes and that only *Eligible Scores* are included in the handicap records of their members.
  - (D) Has the authority to determine if *course* conditions are so poor that handicapping of *competitions* at that facility should be suspended (unless the *Member Association* supplies different guidance). If handicapping is suspended for an extended period, the golf club must obtain approval from its *Member Association*.
  - (E) Responsible for ensuring the *Scratch Rating* and *Slope Rating* of each *Course* at the facility is posted in a prominent place (it is advisable for these ratings to be printed on the score card).
  - (F) The club should compare the *Scratch Rating* and *Slope Rating* of each *course* it regularly uses with those of other *courses*. Separate ratings must be made from each set of tee markers as practical for each gender. A club must accept and use the ratings issued by its *Member Association*. If a club disagrees with its ratings, it may request its *Member Association* to review the ratings in accordance with the relevant *GA* policy.
  - (G) The club should examine results of *competitions*. If net scores of any players appear exceptional, the club should take appropriate action as specified by this System.
  - (H) Ensure accurate maintenance of its members' handicap records. The club is responsible for reviewing the data entered into GOLF Link and received from GOLF Link and applying all other procedures of the *GA Handicap System*.
  - (I) Responsible for ensuring any existing handicap record of a new member of the club is appropriately transferred as required by Section 11(ii) or Section 13(ii). If a handicap record is unavailable, the direction stipulated in Section 11(ii) must be followed. (Note: The handicap record of a member who resigns will be preserved automatically by GOLF Link for an indefinite period.)
  - (J) Responsible for reviewing the accuracy of handicap records of members of the club. Responsible for ensuring compliance with the published *GA* guidelines regarding when (and when not) to record the status of a round as "No Score – Not Approved". If errors exist, the club must move to have such errors corrected as soon as possible. A club may wish to consult its *Member Association* or GOLF Link for assistance.
  - (K) The club may check periodically and consult with other clubs, its *Member Association*, or *GA*, on matters including, but not limited to:
    - The allocation of handicap-stroke holes on the *course*.
    - The determination of handicap competition grades at the club (given that it is considered preferable by the club to split players into separate handicap grades for handicap competition purposes). To enable comparisons and consistency from club to club and from one set of tees to another set of tees, it is recommended that handicap competition grades be determined on the basis of *GA Handicaps*.
    - The determination of *course* set-up and par.
    - The determination if the condition of the *courses* being utilised by the club is so poor that handicapping should be suspended.
    - The maintenance of playing difficulty of the *course*.

- Operation of any Local Rule on preferred lies or *tee up*.

In working with other clubs, the club has the responsibility to provide handicap information in a timely manner.

- (L) Responsible for ensuring new members of the club clarify in writing whether or not they have previously held an official Australian handicap or recognised overseas equivalent, what such handicap was, the lowest handicap the player has held, and timelines for each.
  - (M) Responsible for ensuring the proper application by the club of Section 15 (“Manual Override by Club of Normal Handicap Calculation Process”).
  - (N) Responsible for ensuring the proper application by the club of Section 16 (“Manual Bonus Reduction for Exceptional Net Score”). The club should only effect a Manual Bonus Reduction if it considers that the normal calculation process has not produced an appropriate reduction.
  - (O) Responsible for ensuring that the committee in charge of each competition conducted by the club has determined whether or not to adopt the GA recommendation that any player whose *GA Handicap* has reverted to *Provisional* status (as per Section 14(iii)) will not be eligible to win a prize in a competition or to win a competition.
  - (P) Where the *GA Handicap System* provides to a club flexibility for it to determine its own policy on a specific point, the club should ensure it establishes a position on that point. To assist in determining such positions, a club may consult with other clubs, its *Member Association*, or *GA*. Note: Where a club has separate internal authorities for males and females, the bodies within the club responsible for each should engage in dialogue before establishing any policies relating to handicapping or competition management.
- (iii) Scores should be returned by players as soon as is practicable. If a club feels it is experiencing an unacceptable level of delay in score card return, it would be proper for it to set a reasonable time limit within which scores may be returned (whilst taking into account any individual cases of extenuating circumstances).
- (iv) The club committee may determine which of its membership categories are eligible to hold *GA Handicaps*. Such handicaps shall only be available to golfers in respect of whom an annual affiliation fee is payable to the *GA Member Association*.

## 7. The Visited Club

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- (i) Whilst it is the responsibility of the individual player to ensure that all *Eligible Scores* made at clubs other than the player's *Home Club* are brought to the attention of the *Handicapping Authority* of the player's *Home Club*, in addition, visited clubs shall return *Eligible Scores* to a visitor's *Home Club* (unless they are both on GOLF Link, in which case the visited club will enter the scores into GOLF Link).
- (ii) When a player plays a substantial amount of golf (36 holes or more) over a relatively short period of time at a club (for this purpose called the Visited Club) which is not their *Home Club* and in circumstances which preclude the proper administration of their handicap record and handicap, the Visited Club may use the player's scores to alter their handicap temporarily, in accordance with this System to the extent possible.
- (iii) When a player comes to Australia with a current handicap certified by the governing body of another country, this handicap should be accepted for *competition* at any club in Australia. If the visiting player's handicap has been allocated in accordance with a handicap system which utilises Slope, the player's 'handicap index' should be considered to be the equivalent of a *GA Handicap* for this purpose. Otherwise the player's handicap should be used as a *Daily Handicap*, irrespective of the *Slope Rating* of the *course* being played.

## 8. Daily Scratch Rating (DSR) and Course Rating

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### (i) *Scratch Rating*

- (A) There are two types of *Scratch Rating*:
  - A *Scratch Rating* for women.
  - A *Scratch Rating* for men.
- (B) *Scratch Ratings* in effect at Australian golf *courses* are only considered official if their assessment has been based on the USGA Course Rating System, and otherwise where explicitly authorised by *GA*.
- (C) Where a *Member Association* officially brings into effect a *Scratch Rating* or a *Slope Rating* for a specific set of tees at a *course*, any previously assessed rating for that set of tees is deemed to be redundant.
- (D) A *Scratch Rating* for women is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a *course* for a player with a women's *GA Handicap* of zero. A *Scratch Rating* for men is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of

a *course* for a player with a men's *GA Handicap* of zero. Where the term *Scratch Rating* is used within the *GA Handicap System*, it is deemed to mean either a women's *Scratch Rating* or a men's *Scratch Rating* as the appropriate context determines. The assessment of *Scratch Ratings* is based on the USGA Course Rating System. *Scratch Ratings* are assessed to one decimal place based on distance and other obstacles to the extent they affect the scoring ability of the player with a handicap of zero. Before use in any calculation performed under the *GA Handicap System*, an 18-hole *Scratch Rating* is rounded to the nearest whole number (with .5 being rounded to the next higher whole number); the figure used in an 18-hole calculation will be an 18-hole figure. Note: 9-hole *Scratch Ratings* will increase in increments of .5 (.3-.7 inclusive rounds to .5, .8-.2 inclusive rounds to .0); the figure used in a 9-hole calculation will be a 9-hole figure.

**(ii) Daily Scratch Rating (DSR)**

- (A) The *Daily Scratch Rating (DSR)* is a value that is determined by applying the suite of *DSR* formulas (note: these formulas are posted in the 'Handicapping & Course Rating' section of [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au)). The value will be determined as a whole number. The *DSR* is the *Scratch Rating* of a *course* adjusted to account for variations experienced on a given day to the conditions which are normally experienced at that *course*.
- (B) WHEN TO USE A D.S.R. AND WHEN TO USE A SCRATCH RATING
- (I) Except where explicitly stated otherwise, it is the *DSR* that is used when determining *Differentials* for use in the calculation of a *GA Handicap*, and not the *Scratch Rating*.
  - (II) When determining *Differentials* for use in the calculation of a *GA Handicap*, *Scratch Ratings* in lieu of *DSRs* will be used when processing scores only in accordance with the following Sections of this System or in the following circumstances:
    - (a) Where a score (which is equal to or better than the player's official *Daily Handicap* for that round) from a corporate/trade day or the like, not played in a *Competition* round but played in accordance with the Rules of Golf, is used in accordance with Section 10(xiv).
    - (b) Section 10(iii) 'Competition Condition Limits Number of Clubs to Less than 14'.
    - (c) Section 10(v) 'Four-ball Scores'.
    - (d) Where scores have been returned over 8-15 holes inclusive in accordance with Section 10(vi).
    - (e) Where the play has been managed or controlled by a *Bona-fide Body* that does not have access to GOLF Link or is otherwise not practicably able to process the scores through GOLF Link.
  - (III) When a score that should be included in a *Batch* of scores is omitted either because of administrative error, or because the player has failed to return the score within an appropriate timeframe, or because the GOLF Link number was not available to the administrator at the time the scores were processed, that score (where reasonably possible) should be processed at a later time. When the score is processed at a later time, it should be added to GOLF Link as an Ad Hoc score. The *DSR* value calculated for the original *Batch* of scores is to be used in the Ad Hoc score entry unless after reasonable effort the administrator is not able to identify the correct *DSR*, in which case the *Scratch Rating* is to be used.
- (C) A *DSR* will be determined in accordance with this System for each day on which one or more scores is submitted to GOLF Link for handicapping purposes.
- (D) Clubs should contact the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre (phone 1300 650 750) in order to establish the value of any *DSR* previously determined by GOLF Link.
- (E) When processing scores through GOLF Link, the *Handicapping Authority* should link selected *Batches* of scores returned at a single club if it deems that the different *Batches* of players have not encountered conditions that are clearly different. (The linking of multiple *Batches* of scores is an entirely different action to combining all scores into a single *Batch* before submission to GOLF Link. The difference stems from the importance that is attached to ensuring that each score is correctly identified in GOLF Link as either a score made in a *Competition* (and the type of *Competition*), or a *Conforming Social Score*. Scores need to be *Batched* appropriately to ensure GOLF Link is able to make these distinctions (the regulations governing the make-up of a *Batch* of scores are provided in Clause F below). Contact GOLF Link or your software provider if operational assistance is required.)
- Note i: Where selected *Batches* of scores are linked for this purpose, a separate *DSR* will be calculated for each *Batch*, however all *DSRs* will differ from the respective *Scratch Ratings* by the same amount (unless they are calculated to have the same values as the respective *Scratch Ratings*).

Note ii: It is permissible to link a *Batch of Competition Scores* with a *Batch of Conforming Social Scores*.

Note iii: Two *Batches* of scores must not be linked when the stipulated round for one *Batch* does not include a hole (or holes) that is (are) included in the stipulated round for the other *Batch*.

Note iv: Where different *bona fide bodies* (or entities permitted by this System to conduct competitions from which scores may qualify as *eligible scores*) are using the same *course* or facility on the same day, the resultant *Batches* of scores must not be linked for *DSR* calculation purposes. If the different *Batches* from such sources are returned on the same course, they should be processed through GOLF Link as a single *Batch* if it is administratively practicable to do so and if the committee responsible for each *Batch* is agreeable.

**(F) Regulations governing the make-up of a *Batch* of scores.**

- (I) A *DSR* will be determined by GOLF Link for each submitted *Batch* or Sub-*Batch* of scores.
- (II) A *Batch* of scores submitted to GOLF Link must comprise scores returned by players of the same gender and who have played from tees with the same *Scratch Rating* and who have GOLF Link numbers.
- (III) *Competition Scores* made on a given day must not be submitted to GOLF Link in a *Batch* that includes *Competition Scores* made on a different day.
- (IV) A *DSR* will be determined by GOLF Link for a submitted *Batch of Conforming Social Scores*. *Conforming Social Scores* made on a given day must not be submitted to GOLF Link in a *Batch* that includes *Conforming Social Scores* made on a different day.
- (V) A *Batch of Conforming Social Scores* processed through GOLF Link must not include any *Competition Scores*. A *Batch of Competition Scores* processed through GOLF Link must not include any *Conforming Social Scores*.

(G) If in the opinion of the *Handicapping Authority*, there is a clear change during the day to the conditions experienced by players in a single *Batch* (or it is typical for there to be a clear change during the day to the conditions), *GA* recommends that the field be split and that two separate *DSRs* be calculated. This is done by splitting the *Batch* in GOLF Link into 2 Sub-*Batches* (eg AM Sub-*Batch* and PM Sub-*Batch*). When this action is performed, the scores all stay in the correct competition datasets for competition and prize allocation purposes, however GOLF Link will handicap the morning players against an AM *DSR* and will handicap the PM players against a PM *DSR*. (Contact GOLF Link or your software provider if operational assistance is required.)

(H) A *DSR* will not be permitted to be more than four strokes above the relevant *Scratch Rating* or more than three strokes below the relevant *Scratch Rating*.

Exception: For *courses* that are regularly exposed to severe weather conditions, *Member Associations* are empowered to approve up to an additional two strokes allowance above the relevant *Scratch Rating*. Once this approval has been given, it will apply at all times unless it is withdrawn by the *Member Association*. There will not be any capacity for discretionary day-to-day application of this Exception.

(I) It will be the GOLF Link status of a score that will dictate whether it is included or excluded by GOLF Link in the *DSR* calculation process (see Section 12(ix) for the operational notes and handicapping implications relating to those score statuses). This process is set out as follows:

- “Normal Score”: Included as returned.
- “No Score – Not Approved”: Included with a deemed net value (for *DSR* calculation purposes only) of 10 points worse than the *Scratch Rating*.
- “No Score – Approved”: Excluded.
- “Illegitimate Score”: Excluded.
- “Non-Standard Entry”: The *handicapping score* is included as entered.

Note i: If a score is eligible for inclusion in a *DSR* calculation, it must be submitted to GOLF Link within the appropriate *Batch* of scores.

Note ii: The results of all players to have commenced play (but who are not eligible for inclusion in a *DSR* calculation) should be submitted to GOLF Link within the appropriate *Batch* of scores.

Note iii: Scores submitted to GOLF Link must include each player’s correct *Daily Handicap*.

(J) Scores returned by players without *Normal* or *Frozen GA Handicaps* or with *GA Handicaps* at the following values will be excluded from the *DSR* calculation:

- Women – 42.5-45.4
- Men – 33.5-36.4

(K) In applying the *DSR* formulas (which are posted in the ‘Handicapping & Course Rating’ section of [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au)), GOLF Link will:

- (i) Establish each of the following:
  - The average net score for a field.

- The average handicap of a field.
  - The field size.
  - The type of competition (Stroke, Stableford or Par).
  - The gender of the competitors.
- (ii) Once each of these factors has been established, GOLF Link will compare the actual average net score on the day with the average net score that analysis of millions of prior rounds dictates is normal for this precise field composition. The *DSR* is derived from the outcome of this comparison.

**(iii) Special GA Short Course Ratings**

Where a *course* does not meet the minimum length eligibility requirements of the USGA Course Rating System, but is determined by *GA* and the relevant *Member Association* to present sufficient challenge, it may at the discretion of *GA* and the *Member Association* have a special *GA Short Course Rating* determined for it. Such special *GA Short Course Ratings* may at the discretion of *GA* allow for allocation of official *GA Handicaps*.

**(iv) Tee Up and Preferred Lies**

The operation at a club of the Preferred Lies local rule, or of the *Tee Up* local rule, does not automatically change a course rating. In most instances across Australia, the operation at a club of these local rules will essentially serve to 'normalise' course difficulty (ie the impact is to cancel out the increase in difficulty caused by heavy conditions or of decreased turf quality). However, where a club is operating either, or both, of these local rules, and it believes there is a resultant clear impact to the difficulty of the course, it should contact its *Member Association* to establish whether a change to a course rating would be appropriate.

## 9. Stableford Handicapping Adjustment (SHA)

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- (i) For handicapping, all *eligible scores* must be adjusted to, and processed as, Stableford scores (with 100% of the applicable *Daily Handicap* to be used – the applicable *Daily Handicap* is the *Daily Handicap* derived in accordance with the *GA Handicap System* from the player's *GA Handicap*). The purpose of this regulation is to:
- Reduce the effect of high hole scores for handicap purposes in order to make handicaps more representative of a player's potential ability.
  - Make all handicaps as equitable as possible by using a uniform score type for all handicapping.

Exception: A medal play event which is considered by *GA* or a *Member Association* to be primarily for elite players, may at the discretion of the committee in charge of the competition be exempted from this condition.

- (ii) For all eligible rounds, Stableford points must be awarded at each hole as follows (exception – see clause 9(iv) for details of the adjustment formula for rounds played under the Par scoring system):

Score on an individual hole	Points
More than one over net par <u>OR</u> no score returned	0
One over net par	1
Net par	2
One under net par	3
Two under net par	4
Three under net par	5
Four under net par	6

- (iii) Players may be requested to calculate their own Stableford points for all rounds which are eligible for handicapping purposes. (Note: Whilst the Rules of Golf do not provide to a Committee the authority to penalise a player for failing to calculate their own Stableford points, a Committee may, to assist with handicap administration, introduce a "club regulation" to this effect and provide disciplinary sanctions (eg ineligibility to play in the next club competition/s) for failure to act in accordance with the regulation.)
- (iv) Any round eligible for handicapping purposes which is played under the Par scoring system will be adjusted by GOLF Link into a Stableford score by adding 36 points to the player's final result (for example GOLF Link will adjust a score of 4 down into 32 points; the score of 32 points will be the player's *Handicapping Score*). No special consideration will be given to any score on a hole that gives rise to a result better than net birdie, or a plus. (Note: Where a 9-hole Par score is processed for handicapping, it will be adjusted by GOLF Link into a Stableford score by adding 18 points to the player's final result.)
- (v) If a player is competing in a Par, or Medal (stroke) play *competition*, for these *competitions* their Stableford score is disregarded when assessing any of the following:
- *Competition* placings.
  - Allocation of prizes.

- Event winners or results.
- (vi) When returning a score for the purpose of attaining a *GA Handicap*, see Section 11(i)(B) for details regarding the allocation of a Temporary *Daily Handicap*.

## 10. Scores for Handicapping Purposes

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### (i) Regular Singles *Competitions* and *Conforming Social Scores*

Scores established in all 18-hole singles stroke (includes Par and Stableford) *Competition* rounds and all *Conforming Social Scores* (see Definitions) played at *courses* with a *Scratch Rating* determined in accordance with a system which is officially recognised by *GA* will be used for handicapping purposes.

### (ii) One Player in *Competition* (who has not played unaccompanied)

If there is only one player in a *competition* otherwise deemed eligible for handicapping by Section 10, the *competition* must still be processed for handicapping purposes provided the player has been accompanied throughout the round by a *Marker* or *Markers*.

### (iii) *Competition* Condition Limits Number of Clubs to Less than 14

When a *competition* limits the number of clubs that may be used to less than 14, only a score that is equal to or better than the player's official *Daily Handicap* for that round may be entered into GOLF Link.

Note i: If the *Handicapping Authority* decides to use these scores, they must be entered into GOLF Link as Ad Hoc scores. They must not be used in any *DSR* calculation. The *Scratch Rating* will be used in the *Differential* calculation, not any *DSR*.

Note ii: The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

Note iii: *GA* encourages the handicapping of these scores, provided it does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club.

### (iv) Score for Player Who is Disqualified

When a player is disqualified, the score they had may be used for handicapping purposes at the discretion of the *Handicapping Authority*. If it is a technical Rules breach that has caused disqualification (eg card not signed or handicap not recorded), at the discretion of the *Handicapping Authority* the score should still be used for handicapping.

Note i: An underlying principle of the *GA Handicap System* is that a score should be used for handicapping unless there is a good reason not to use it. Being disqualified under the Rules of Golf is in itself not a good reason to preclude a score from being used for handicapping. As a general principle, a score should not be used for handicapping if it was made in such way that would necessitate a significant amount of guess work being involved in estimating what the proper score would have been had the round been played strictly in accordance with the Rules of Golf (eg because the player used non-conforming clubs, or used non-conforming balls, or because the player cheated).

Note ii: See Section 19 for further related guidance.

### (v) Four-ball Scores

#### (A) WHEN TO USE SCORE OBTAINED IN FOUR-BALL COMPETITION FOR HANDICAPPING PURPOSES

Four-ball scores (including from mixed events) SHOULD be used for handicapping an individual player but only if the following requirements are met:

- The pair that the relevant player played in has a score of at least 6 better than the *Scratch Rating* of the tees that the relevant player played from. (Note: *DSRs* will not be calculated for four-ball events.)
- The individual player's score appears at least 9 times on the four-ball score card.
- The adjusted score (after the method described in (B) below has been followed to create an individual score card) is equal to or better than the individual player's official *Daily Handicap* for that round (ie where the adjusted Stableford points score (plus the *Scratch Rating* minus the Par) is equal to or better than 36 points).

#### (B) PROCEDURE FOR CREATING INDIVIDUAL SCORE CARD FROM FOUR-BALL SCORE CARD FOR HANDICAPPING PURPOSES:

- Where an individual player's score is to be handicapped (irrespective of whether the *competition* is played as Par, Stroke, or Stableford), it must be processed as a Stableford score in accordance with the procedures contained within this regulation.

- When a player's score is not recorded on the four-ball card, they are given 1½ Stableford points. (Exception: When a player's score is not recorded on the four-ball card, and their partner's score is 1 Stableford point, the player is given 1 Stableford point.)
- When a player's score counts on the four-ball card for a hole, they are given the appropriate number of Stableford points for that hole. (When both players have 0 Stableford points on a hole, they are both considered to have their score listed on the score card, including for the purposes of 'being on the card 9 times or more'. For the purposes of creating an adjusted individual score card, each player will have 0 points listed on the individual card for this hole.)
- If two identical net scores are recorded by partners on a hole, both scores are eligible to be used on an adjusted individual score card. However, if the first player to hole out can be readily identified, the second player is deemed to have not recorded a score for that hole.

Note: Clubs are to strongly discourage players from recording the scores of both partners on a hole or holes unless a concurrent singles event is being played. Players who regularly return four-ball score cards featuring identical net scores for both players in the same hole will not be eligible to have these rounds handicapped under Section 10(v) of this System – clubs should consider using Section 15 of this System to accommodate such players.

- When all the gaps in the card have been filled in, the points are totalled, and where a half appears in the total, the points total is rounded to the next lower whole number.
- (C) If an extended 18-hole individual score obtained via this method is processed through GOLF Link, the score type option to be chosen in GOLF Link by the administrator MUST be 'Four-ball' OR the score MUST be processed as an Ad Hoc score.
- (D) The course rating value that GOLF Link will use for this purpose is the *Scratch Rating*, not a *DSR*. These scores must not be used in any *DSR* calculation. In all other respects regarding the inclusion of the score in the player's handicap record, the score will be treated as a regular 18-hole singles competition score.
- (E) The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

**(vi) Scores Returned From Play of Anywhere Between 8 and 17 Holes**

Scores returned from 8-17 holes of play may be used for handicapping purposes at the discretion of the *Handicapping Authority*. The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play). (Note: GA encourages the handicapping of these scores, provided it does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club, and provided there is not a clear novelty nature to the play.)

See Decision 9 and Decision 12 in Section 19 for GOLF Link score entry instructions.

The following conditions will apply to 8-17 hole scores.

- (A) Where 16-17 holes inclusive have been played, the player will be deemed to have had net par for the remaining holes (unless it is considered the player has discontinued play with a view to achieving a specific score for handicap purposes). The score will be processed as an 18-hole score.
- (B) Scores returned over 8-15 holes will not be doubled or extended. They will be entered into GOLF Link as 9-hole scores.
- (C) Where only 8 holes have been played, the player will be deemed to have had net par on the 9<sup>th</sup> hole. The score will be entered into GOLF Link as a 9-hole score.
- (D) Any score of less than 8 holes will be disregarded.
- (E) Where 10-15 holes inclusive have been played, the first 9 holes played will be used and the remaining holes will be disregarded.

Note i: Should the player not have started from the 1<sup>st</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> holes (as per the order on the score card), it is holes 1-9 or 10-18 that will be used with the remainder being disregarded.

Note ii: If the player has not played the complete 1<sup>st</sup> nine holes on the score card OR the complete 2<sup>nd</sup> nine holes on the score card, but has played as many as 8 holes of either of the two nines, it is those 8 holes that will be used, with all others being disregarded. In such a case, the player will be deemed to have had net par on the unplayed hole on the nine to be used.



Note iii: The scores shall not be used for handicapping if the player has not played as many as 8 holes of either the 1<sup>st</sup> nine holes OR the 2<sup>nd</sup> nine holes on the score card.

Exception: If a club is regularly conducting events on an 8-14 hole configuration that does not include as many as 8 holes of either the 1<sup>st</sup> nine holes OR the 2<sup>nd</sup> nine holes on the score card, and where the club wishes to be able to use such scores for handicapping, it should contact its *Member Association*. The *Member Association* will provide a *Scratch Rating* that will enable the use of such scores.

(F) Determination of *Daily Handicap* for score returned over 8-17 holes

(I) For a score returned over 16-17 holes on a *course*, a player's *Daily Handicap* is their 18-hole *Daily Handicap* for that *course* (note: the player is deemed to have net par for the hole not played, or for the two holes not played (see Clause A above)).

(II) A player's *Daily Handicap* for a 9-hole score on a *course* is determined firstly by establishing what the player's 18-hole *Daily Handicap* would be for that *course*. The 18-hole *Daily Handicap* is then applied to the *course's* ordinary 18-hole Stroke Index to determine the number of strokes the player will receive on the specific holes being played.

Note: Even if the player plays 8 holes, or plays anywhere between 10-15 holes inclusive, the player is still handicapped only on a 9-hole score (see Clause E above). As a result, if the player has played anywhere between 10-15 holes inclusive, the only interest for handicapping purposes is in what their handicap is and what their score is for the 9-holes being handicapped.

The step-by-step process for determining a 9-hole *Daily Handicap* is:

- The 9-hole *course* option being used will have a *Slope Rating* number that looks like an 18-hole *Slope Rating* number.
- The 18-hole *Daily Handicap* the player would play off for that *Slope Rating* number is assessed.
- The 18-hole *Daily Handicap* number is then applied to the Stroke Index on the score card to determine how many handicap strokes the player receives for the 9 holes being played.
  - EXAMPLE 1: If Stroke Index holes 1 and 3 are on the front nine and the 9-hole round is being played over the front 9, then a player whose 18-hole *Daily Handicap* came out at 3 (after following the above process) would play off a handicap of 2 for that nine. (The same player would play off a handicap of 1 if the round was being played on the back nine.)
  - EXAMPLE 2: If Stroke Index holes 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17,19, and 21 are on the front nine and the 9-hole round is being played over the front 9, then a player whose 18-hole *Daily Handicap* came out at 21 (after following the above process) would play off a handicap of 11 for that nine. (The same player would play off a handicap of 10 if the round was being played on the back nine.)

Note: When entering a 9-hole score into GOLF Link, it is important that the above process be followed, and that what is entered is the 9-hole 'played off' value that has been calculated for the player as a result. This is because part of the process GOLF Link will automatically perform when it combines two 9-hole scores is to add together the two 9-hole 'played off' values from the two 9-hole score entries. (If an 18-hole *Daily Handicap* value is wrongly entered with a 9-hole score entry, GOLF Link will think that the player played off a handicap which was twice as large as what it actually was – and that will credit the player with a score that is twice as good as what it actually was.)

(G) The initial 9-hole score a player returns is to be entered into GOLF Link; it will not immediately be used in the calculation of the player's *GA Handicap*. It will be automatically held by GOLF Link in the player's handicap record until another 9-hole score is entered. The two 9-hole scores will be combined automatically by GOLF Link to create a single 18-hole score.

Note: The rating for each 9 holes is retained in the GOLF Link database, so it does not matter whether the two 9-hole scores to be combined come from the same *course* or different *courses* – GOLF Link will add the two 9-hole scores together, it will also add the two 9-hole *Scratch Ratings* together (.5 rounds up), and then compare the two totals (the average of the two *Slope Ratings* will be used (.5 rounds up)). It is this 18-hole score that will be used in the calculation of the player's handicap.

- (H) A 9-hole score will be retained for combination with another 9-hole score until it is older than the 20<sup>th</sup> oldest 18-hole *Actual Score*. 9-hole scores will be combined in the order they are received by GOLF Link, and not necessarily by date order.
- (I) An 18-hole score created by the combination of two 9-hole scores will display the date and *course* name of both 9-hole scores. It will also display the average of the two 9-hole *Slope Ratings*, and the rounded sum of the two 9-hole *Scratch Ratings* (these *Slope Rating* and *Scratch Rating* values will be used in the calculation of the *Differential*).

**(vii) Player Plays Within *Competition* Field But Doesn't Enter *Competition***

When a person plays within a *competition* field, but does not actually enter the *competition*, their score, if attested by a *marker*, should be used for handicapping purposes at the discretion of the *Handicapping Authority*.

The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

If the *Handicapping Authority* determines to use such scores, they will be deemed to be *Conforming Social Scores*.

**(viii) Scores Returned in a *Competition* that has been Declared Null and Void**

A score returned by a player in a *competition* declared null and void should be used for handicapping purposes provided *course* or weather conditions have not notably compromised the proper playing of the game for that player.

The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping.

**(ix) Scores Returned in Open or Professional *Competitions***

Scores returned in Open or Professional *competitions* by players with *GA Handicaps* will be used for handicapping purposes. All such players to have played in a given round will be entered into GOLF Link in a single *batch*.

**(x) Requirement to Maintain the Overall Distance of a Rated *Course***

- (A) Whilst a *course* should generally be played at its rated length, a club does have a large degree of flexibility around the movement of tee markers from day to day provided overall *course* distance remains substantially the same. Where unusual weather or *course* conditions are in evidence, a club may wish to set the daily tee markers such that overall *course* distance is altered provided the overall change is no more than 100 metres.

When the position of the daily tee markers on the *course* played are more than 100 metres overall from the permanent rating markers for that *course* for an 18-hole round, the scores must not be handicapped.

Note i: If on one hole the tee markers are 15 metres forward and on another hole they are 10 metres back, the overall difference for these two holes is considered to be 5 metres from the rated length.

Note ii: For a round of less than 18 holes, a pro rata length must be calculated; eg for a 9-hole round, the distance is 50 metres.

- (B) Unless determined otherwise by the *Member Association*, handicap conditions do not prevail when the tee markers, under normal circumstances, are placed more than 20 metres in front or 20 metres behind the relevant set of permanent rating markers on more than three holes for rounds of 14-18 holes, or on more than two holes for rounds of 8-13 holes. (An exception applies for *courses* with cyclical permanent rating marker placements which have been approved by a *Member Association*.)
- (C) Where average tee marker placement over time on a *course* results in an effective average total *course* distance that is considered by the *Member Association* to be materially different to the rated *course*, the *Member Association* should amend the official *Scratch Rating* accordingly.
- (D) Hole placements are not taken into consideration in determining whether or not a club has satisfied the requirements around maintaining the overall distance of a rated *course*.

**(xi) Scores Returned in Novelty Events such as Bisque Par and Three-Ball *Competitions***

Scores returned in novelty events such as Bisque Par and Three-Ball competitions may be used for handicapping at the discretion of the *Handicapping Authority* but only after conversion to a regular Stableford format, and only if the Rules of singles stroke play have been adhered to.

The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

(Note: GA encourages the handicapping of these scores, provided it does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club, and provided there is not a clear novelty nature to the relevant competition.)

**(xii) Scores Returned in Aggregate Teams Events**

Scores returned in Aggregate Teams Events (eg Two-ball Aggregate and Two-Ball Multiplier competitions) should be used for handicapping.

Note A: To be used for handicapping, these events must require each player to play their own ball on each hole until it is no longer reasonable for them to record at least 1 Stableford point. It is each player's individual score that is used for handicapping.

Note B: The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that have a character which is not typical to the club (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

Note C: The *Handicapping Authority* should advise all players prior to the commencement of the *competition* that the Rules of singles stroke play will apply – with specific attention being drawn to the Advice Rule and also to the Rule regarding Order of Play.

Note D: From time to time a committee may be concerned that the Rules of singles play may not have been strictly adhered to. In such a case, the competition should only be disqualified from being processed for handicapping if the committee makes the determination that the results have been clearly impacted by widespread non-adherence to the Rules of singles play.

**(xiii) Scores Returned in Pro-Am Events**

Scores returned in Pro-Am events may, at the discretion of the committee, be used for handicapping provided one of the following requirements is met:

(A) The Rules of singles stroke play are adhered to and each player's hole-by-hole scores are recorded on the submitted score card.

(B) The Rules of four-ball stroke play are adhered to.

Note i: The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that are unusual in character (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

Note ii: GA encourages the handicapping of these scores, provided it does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club.

**(xiv) Scores Returned in Corporate/Trade Days**

A score returned in a corporate/trade day or the like, not played in a *Competition* round but played in accordance with the Rules of Golf, may be used but only where it is equal to or better than the player's official *Daily Handicap* for that round.

Note i: The *Handicapping Authority* should have in place a policy stipulating whether or not such scores will be processed for handicapping. Exceptions to the policy may be made to cater for events that are unusual in character (such exceptions should be announced prior to the relevant day's play).

Note ii: GA encourages the handicapping of these scores, provided it does not place an undue administrative burden on the golf club.

Note iii: These scores must be entered into GOLF Link as Ad Hoc scores. They must not be used in any *DSR* calculation. The *Scratch Rating* will be used in the *Differential* calculation, not any *DSR*.

## 11. Allocation of GA Handicap

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**(i) Allocation of GA Handicap to Player Who Has NOT Previously Held an official Australian Handicap or Recognised Overseas Equivalent**

In order for a player who has NOT previously held an official Australian handicap or recognised overseas equivalent to obtain a *GA Handicap*, the following process must be followed:

(A) Have the player clarify in writing that they have not previously held an official Australian handicap or recognised overseas equivalent.

(B) *Stableford Handicapping Adjustment* will apply to a player's Initial rounds. When returning an Initial score for the purpose of attaining a *GA Handicap*, a male player is granted a *Temporary Daily Handicap* of 36 and a female player is granted a *Temporary Daily Handicap* of 45.

Note a: These *Temporary Daily Handicaps* enable the player to know how many handicap strokes they receive on each hole. They apply solely for handicap calculation purposes and have no standing for the purposes of calculating any competition results.

Note b: These *Temporary Daily Handicaps* shall not be altered until the player has returned the requisite number of initial scores. Once the player has returned such number of scores, the *Temporary Daily Handicaps* shall be completely disregarded.

Note c: www.golf.org.au will not display the Temporary *Daily Handicap* values for a player's Initial rounds. www.golf.org.au will display the 'Sloped Played To' values for each of a player's Initial rounds.

(C) A player will not be eligible to receive a *GA Handicap* until their handicap record in GOLF Link includes at least three 18-hole rounds. (Whilst 9-hole scores may be used for this purpose at the discretion of the *Home Club*, two 9-hole scores will be the equivalent of one 18-hole round.)

Exception: Where a player's GOLF Link handicap record does not include three 18-hole rounds but it is clear that the maximum *GA Handicap* is warranted, the *Home Club* should take immediate action to enable the player to receive a *GA Handicap* which is the maximum value. This immediate action will include adding into the player's GOLF Link handicap record enough *Estimate Scores* with high values that will enable the player to immediately receive the maximum handicap.

(D) Each Initial score the player returns should be entered into GOLF Link as soon as possible. The only GOLF Link Score Status options available for these scores are "Normal Score" or "Non-Standard Entry" (the score must be disregarded if it is not appropriate to either of these two options).

Note: Should the *Handicapping Authority* have good reason to believe a lesser or higher *GA Handicap* is more appropriate than that which is indicated by the Initial scores, it should amend in GOLF Link the values of the Initial scores to the extent needed to produce the appropriate *GA Handicap*.

Note A: Section 12 details the procedure by which these and other scores are utilised to calculate a *GA Handicap*.

Note B: The *Handicapping Authority* should immediately effect a handicap adjustment (see Section 12(vi)) if it has good reason (other than that provided by any previously-held handicap (see Section 11(ii) if the player has previously held an official handicap)) to consider that a lower or higher handicap is more appropriate to the player's ability than that which results from this process. In such a case, the *Handicapping Authority* is not required to act in accordance with Section 15.

Note C: Any previously-held official Australian handicap and handicap record (or recognised overseas handicap) must be reinitiated in accordance with Section 11(ii).

**(ii) Reinitiating Handicap for Player Who Has Previously Held an official Australian Handicap or Recognised Overseas Equivalent**

(A) When a player (who has previously been a member of an affiliated club) joins a club after a period away from handicap golf, the *Handicapping Authority* of the 'new' club must reinitiate the status of the player's last-recorded handicap (using the player's archived GOLF Link handicap record if applicable) even if there is good reason to consider that a lower or higher *GA Handicap* is more appropriate to the player's current ability (but see 11(ii)(C) and 11(ii)(D) below). If the player's handicap record is not available, the player's handicap must be reinitiated by the *Home Club* entering three 18-hole *Estimate Scores* (using the player's last-known handicap as a guide) into GOLF Link.

(B) **Where both the previous *Home Club* and the 'new' *Home Club* are on GOLF Link, the 'new' *Home Club* MUST perform a '*Home Club Transfer*'.** (Queries regarding this process should be directed to the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750.) A new handicap record must not be created.

(C) If the *Handicapping Authority* of the 'new' club quickly considers there is good reason for the player to hold a *GA Handicap* that is higher than their last recorded handicap, a handicap adjustment should be effected. In such a case, the *Handicapping Authority* is not required to act in accordance with Section 15. However, the *Member Association* Handicap Manager must be consulted if the determined figure would fall into any of the following categories:

- More than two strokes higher than the most recent previous figure for players whose last recorded handicap was 4.4 or less.
- More than 3 strokes higher than the previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was 4.5-10.4.
- More than 4 strokes higher than any previous handicap for players whose last recorded handicap was greater than 10.4.

(D) If the *Handicapping Authority* of the 'new' club considers there is good reason for the player to hold a *GA Handicap* that is lower than their last recorded handicap, a handicap adjustment should be given due consideration. Any ensuing handicap adjustment must be effected in accordance with Section 15.

(E) The procedure detailed in Section 12(vi) is to be used to effect handicap adjustments.

Note: 'Last recorded handicap' may include, at the discretion of the *Member Association*, an official handicap issued by a recognised overseas *handicapping authority*.

## 12. Calculation of Handicaps

**General Note:** There are two types of official *GA Handicap*; a *GA Handicap* and a *Daily Handicap*. The *GA Handicap* is not designed for use in handicap competition play; rather it is GA's assessment of the relative golfing ability of a player on a *course* with a *neutral Slope Rating*. The *Daily Handicap* is the handicap to be used in handicap competition play. The *GA Handicap* is one of the factors used in the calculation of the *Daily Handicap*.

(i) **Differential (this is the value that is featured in the 'Sloped Played To' column on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au))**

*Differentials* must be calculated as follows:

$\begin{aligned} \text{Course Par plus Daily Handicap minus (Stableford Points Total minus 36)} &= \mathbf{A} \\ \text{A minus Daily Scratch Rating} &= \mathbf{B} \\ \text{B multiplied by Neutral Slope Rating (ie 113)} &= \mathbf{C} \\ \text{C divided by Slope Rating} &= \mathbf{D} \\ \mathbf{D (rounded to one decimal place)} &= \mathbf{Differential} \end{aligned}$
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Exception: Where D is calculated to be more than 40.0 for men or 50.0 for women, the *Differential* will be deemed to be 40.0 for men or 50.0 for women.

Note i: 0.35 rounds to 0.4, 0.3501 rounds to 0.4, 0.55 rounds to 0.6, 0.5501 rounds to 0.6, 5.35 rounds to 5.4, 5.3501 rounds to 5.4, 5.55 rounds to 5.6, 5.5501 rounds to 5.6, etc.

Note ii: +0.35 rounds to +0.3, +0.3501 rounds to +0.4, +0.55 rounds to +0.5, +0.5501 rounds to +0.6, +5.35 rounds to +5.3, +5.3501 rounds to +5.4, +5.55 rounds to +5.5, +5.5501 rounds to +5.6, etc.

(ii) **Formula for Calculation of *GA Handicap***

A *GA Handicap* is calculated from a rolling sample of the player's most recent 20 *Actual Scores* (note: the most recent 20 *Actual Scores* are known as *Live Scores*). If a player's handicap record contains a lesser number than 20 *Actual Scores*, the number of *Live Scores* used to calculate the player's *GA Handicap* is as listed in the table below.

There is no requirement for a player's *Live Scores* to have been returned within a specific timeframe. For example, the *Live Scores* may span a period of three years or they may span a period of three months.

Once a player's handicap record contains 20 *Live Scores*, the next *Actual Score* they return will result in the oldest of the existing *Live Scores* losing its status as a *Live Score* (to be replaced by the new *Actual Score*). Hence, the handicap calculation process is considered to be a 'rolling sample' method.

The procedure for calculating a *GA Handicap* is as follows:

**STEP 1** – Use the table below to determine the number of *Differentials* to be included in the calculation of a player's *GA Handicap* (note: the *Differential* is the value that is featured in the 'Sloped Played To' column on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au)):

<b>Number of Live Scores in Player's Handicap Record</b>	<b>Differentials (ie 'Sloped Played To' values) to be Used in the Calculation</b>
3 to 6	Lowest 1
7 or 8	Lowest 2
9 or 10	Lowest 3
11 or 12	Lowest 4
13 or 14	Lowest 5
15 or 16	Lowest 6
17 or 18	Lowest 7
19 or 20	Lowest 8

**STEP 2** – Average the *Differentials* being used (as determined by the above table).

**STEP 3** – Multiply the average by 0.93. (Note: This is the *Multiplier*. The *Multiplier* is a mathematical balancing factor, the purpose of which is to help to achieve national results patterns for net competitions that are as equitable as possible. Its necessity is the result of the different standard deviations of net scores exhibited by players on different handicap levels.)

**STEP 4** – After applying STEP 3, delete all numbers after the tenths' digit. Do NOT round to the nearest tenth. (For example 23.6983 becomes 23.6. The *GA Handicap* is therefore 23.6 (although note the *Cap Provision* below).)

**Note:** **CAP PROVISION** – A player's *GA Handicap* is not permitted to increase by any more than 5 strokes beyond their best/lowest *GA Handicap* from the previous 12-month rolling period

- (A) A player's *Cap Point* is their best/lowest *GA Handicap* from the 12-month period extending back in time from the round that resulted in their most recent *Actual Score*. (The *GA Handicap* that results from the processing of this most recent round is eligible to count as the *Cap Point*.) The *Cap Point* displayed on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au) is considered in the processing of the next round the player will play. When the player's next round is processed through GOLF Link, the resultant *GA Handicap* that will be calculated for the player will not be permitted to be more than five strokes above the *Cap Point*.
- (B) Each time a player has an *Actual Score* processed for handicapping purposes, they shall also have their *Cap Point* re-determined. This re-determined value is only permitted to apply to the NEXT round the player plays, NOT the CURRENT round. The *Cap Point* permitted to apply to the current round is that *Cap Point* which was calculated from the most recent score played prior to the current round.
- (C) A newly-determined *Cap Point* is considered in the processing of the player's NEXT *Actual Score* irrespective of when this next round is played. (As a result, it is permissible for a player's *Cap Point* to become more than 12 months old in the period between two rounds being played.)
- (D) Upon the completion of Step 4 above, the calculated figure will be compared with the *Cap Point*. If the *Cap Point* is five or more strokes lower than the figure produced by Step 4, the *Cap* will take effect and the player's *GA Handicap* will be the sum of the *Cap Point* PLUS 5.0 strokes. (Example: Where in the previous 12-month period a player's best/lowest *GA Handicap* is 11.4, the player's *GA Handicap* (when it is recalculated as a result of their NEXT round being processed) will not be permitted to increase beyond 16.4 at this time.)
- (E) There is no limit on downward movement of a player's *GA Handicap*.
- (F) The *Cap* will only take effect once a player has 20 *Actual Scores* in their handicap record. (For *Cap* purposes, a *GA Handicap* calculated on the basis of less than 20 *Actual Scores* can not be a *Cap Point* and is disregarded.)
- (G) Where the player's *Home Club* performs an upward handicap adjustment, for *Cap* purposes, a *GA Handicap* calculated prior to such a manual over-ride can not be a *Cap Point* and is totally disregarded. (The same exclusion does not apply in the case of downward manual adjustments.)

**(iii) Formula for Calculation of Daily Handicap**

- (A) A *Daily Handicap* is the number of strokes a player receives for play at the *course* being played. The *Daily Handicap* is expressed as a whole number.

Note: The *GA Handicap* is not designed for use in handicap competition play; rather it is one of the factors used in the calculation of the *Daily Handicap*. The *Daily Handicap* is the handicap to be used in handicap competition play.

<b>(B) <math>Daily\ Handicap = GA\ Handicap \times (Slope\ Rating \div 113)</math></b>
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Note i: 0.5 rounds to 1, 0.501 rounds to 1, 10.5 rounds to 11, 10.501 rounds to 11, 20.5 rounds to 21, 20.501 rounds to 21, etc.

Note ii: +0.5 rounds to Scratch, +0.501 rounds to +1, +1.5 rounds to +1, +1.501 rounds to +2, +2.5 rounds to +2, +2.501 rounds to +3, etc.

**(iv) Maximum Handicaps**

- (A) The maximum value for *GA Handicaps* is as follows:
- Women 45.4
  - Men 36.4
- (B) The maximum value for *Daily Handicaps* is as follows:
- Women 45
  - Men 36

**(v) Player Fails to Return Score Card**

If a player fails (for a reason which is not approved by the committee in charge of the *competition*) to post an acceptable score as soon as practicable after completion of their round, the following process should be followed:

- The round is to be recorded in GOLF Link with the status of 'No Score – Not Approved' (provided the *Stipulated Round* was intended to be anywhere from 8 to 18 holes inclusive).
- However, if the committee considers the player is most likely to have had a 'good' score, it should NOT use the 'No Score – Not Approved' option. Instead it should enter a score for the player for

that round equivalent to the best/lowest *Differential* of the player's most recent previous 19 *Differentials* AND select the GOLF Link 'Non-Standard Entry' score status option.

- Where a committee records a player's score status for a round as either 'Non-Standard Entry' or 'No Score – Not Approved', but then subsequently becomes aware of the score the player actually had, it SHOULD replace the original entry with the score the player had.

Note i: See Section 12(ix) for operational notes and handicapping implications of the above stipulated score statuses.

Note ii: A handicap will lose its full status in the event that a player should accrue in their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* (ie their list of *Live Scores*) five or more entries with a status of 'No Score – Not Approved'. Such a handicap will be known as a "*Provisional GA Handicap*".

#### (vi) Manual Handicap Adjustments

##### Operational Notes:

When a club's GOLF Link administrator uses the 'Adjust Handicap' function in GOLF Link, GOLF Link will automatically add a series of artificial scores to the player's handicap record. It is these artificial scores that will result in the player's handicap adjusting to the desired figure.

Note: Non-GOLF Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by GOLF Link.

#### (vii) Recalculation of Handicap after New Score Processed

*Eligible scores* are to be processed through GOLF Link as soon as practicable. GOLF Link will re-calculate a player's *GA Handicap* immediately upon the receipt of a new score for that player.

Note: Non-GOLF Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by GOLF Link.

#### (viii) Player Competes in Competition Round before a Previous Handicap-Altering Score is Processed

(A) In a situation where a player competes in a competition round before a previous handicap-altering score is processed, their correct *GA Handicap* will be that displayed on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au) or (for clubs not operating within the GOLF Link system) such other display item as designated by their *Home Club* (even if they are aware of what their new handicap will be).

Note: The provisions of this System which enable a Visited Club to temporarily amend a player's handicap (ie Section 7(ii)) will govern in the event of a conflict between those provisions and this Clause.

(B) The committee in charge of a competition may require a player to play off the *Daily Handicap* appropriate to what their new *GA Handicap* will be, even if their *GA Handicap* is yet to be officially adjusted.

(C) A committee may also adjust a player's *Daily Handicap* and net score after the player has submitted their score card in a stroke play competition. In such an instance, the listing of the incorrect *Daily Handicap* is considered to be a committee error and consequently the player is not penalised.

(D) In a match play competition, a player's *Daily Handicap* may not be altered after their round has commenced. Any queries regarding a player's handicap in match play must be raised with the committee in charge of the competition prior to the commencement of the player's round.

#### (ix) GOLF Link Score Status Options – Operational Notes & Handicap Implications

The various GOLF Link score status options and their associated handicap implications are as follows (see Section 19 for examples of practical application):

##### (A) "Normal Score"

- This is an '*Actual Score*' which is to be considered when determining a player's *Live Scores*.

##### (B) "No Score – Not Approved"

- The player's *Differential* for that round will be deemed to be the equivalent of the worst *Differential* of the player's 19 most recent previous 18-hole *Differentials* (an 18-hole *Differential* created from the combination of two 9-hole *Differentials* will be considered to be an 18-hole *Differential* for this purpose). Provided the *Stipulated Round* was intended to be anywhere from 8-18 holes inclusive, an 18-hole "No Score – Not Approved" entry will be inserted into the player's GOLF Link record as a result of this action. (Note: If the player's handicap record contains less than 19 entries of actual or artificially generated score values, the player's *Differential* for that round will be deemed to be the equivalent of the worst *Differential* of all scores contained in the player's handicap record.)
- This is an *Actual Score* which is to be considered when determining a player's *Live Scores*.

Note i: A *GA Handicap* will lose its full status in the event that a player should accrue in their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* (ie their list of *Live Scores*) five or more entries with a status of 'No Score – Not Approved'. Such a *GA Handicap* will be known as a "*Provisional GA Handicap*".

Note ii: The GOLF Link Tier 1 website provides a function which enables clubs to produce a report listing the quantity of 'No Score – Not Approved' entries each member has in their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* (ie their list of *Live Scores*). (Ring the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750 with any queries.)

**(C) "No Score – Approved"**

- The entry appears in the player's handicap record however the player is not considered to have returned a score.
- This is NOT an *Actual Score* and is to be discounted when determining a player's *Live Scores*.

**(D) "Illegitimate Score"**

- The entry appears in the player's handicap record however the player is not considered to have returned a score.
- This is NOT an *Actual Score* and is to be discounted when determining a player's *Live Scores*.

**(E) "Non-Standard Entry"**

- This Score Status option is used when:
  - (a) A player competes in a Stableford or Par *competition* and does not complete the *stipulated round* but returns a legitimate score card.
  - (b) A player (who has played at least eight holes) has failed to complete all holes in a Stroke *competition* and where the *Handicapping Authority* wishes to use the score for handicapping purposes.
  - (c) A player in Stroke, Par, or Stableford completes all holes, is disqualified, and the *Handicapping Authority* wishes to use the score for handicapping purposes (this should happen for example when the only breach is a technical one such as failure to sign score card, or failure to record handicap on score card).
- The club's GOLF Link administrator will enter into GOLF Link the player's *handicapping score* and also where applicable their *competition score*.
- Where applicable, the *competition score* will be included in the list of results for that *competition* and will be used in the determination of prizes.
- If for a 'Non-Standard Entry' there is a *handicapping score* entered but no *competition score* entered, on www.golf.org.au the player's *competition score* entry for this round will be displayed as '-'.
  - The *handicapping score* is an *Actual Score* which is to be considered when determining a player's *Live Scores*.

Note: Non-GOLF Link clubs will need to ensure their calculation processes replicate those performed by GOLF Link.

### 13. Life of Scores & Lapsed Handicaps

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- (i) A score is a *Live Score* if it is one of the player's most recent 20 *Actual Scores*. There is no requirement for a player's *Live Scores* to have been returned within a specific timeframe.
- (ii) **When a player changes from one Home Club to another, the 'new' Home Club MUST perform a 'Home Club Transfer'**. (Queries relating to this process should be directed to the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750.) **A new GOLF Link record must not be created.**
- (iii) If a player does not have current membership of an affiliated body, their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* remain *Live Scores*, however their *GA Handicap* will be considered to be *Lapsed* and will have no official status.

### 14. Maximum Handicaps, Provisional Handicaps, and Club Handicaps

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- (i) Calculation of a women's *GA Handicap* beyond 45.4 is not permitted. Calculation of a men's *GA Handicap* beyond 36.4 is not permitted.
- (ii) Calculation of a women's *Daily Handicap* beyond 45 is not permitted. Calculation of a men's *Daily Handicap* beyond 36 is not permitted.
- (iii) A *GA Handicap* will lose its full status in the event that a player should accrue in their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* five or more entries with a status of 'No Score – Not Approved' (note: full status is automatically regained upon the number of 'No Score – Not Approved' entries in the player's most recent 20 *Actual Scores* decreasing to four or less). Such a handicap will be known as a "*Provisional GA Handicap*". *GA* recommends that players with *Provisional GA Handicaps* not be eligible to win prizes in competitions which have as a condition of entry a requirement that competitors hold *GA Handicaps*.



Note: The GOLF Link Tier 1 website provides a function which enables clubs to produce a report listing the quantity of 'No Score – Not Approved' entries each member has in their most recent 20 *Actual Scores* (ie their list of *Live Scores*). (Ring the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750 with any queries.)

- (iv) GOLF Link will not maintain or record "Club Handicaps". Should a committee consider it appropriate, it may allocate selected members with internal "Club Handicaps". It will be solely for the respective committee to determine how it calculates the "Club Handicaps" of its members. When entering a score into a player's GOLF Link handicap record (or when processing a *competition* for handicap purposes), it is the player's *Daily Handicap* that must be used to calculate a net score, NOT any Club Handicap that may have been used for the purposes of determining *competition* placings, allocation of prizes, or event winners or results.

## 15. Manual Override by Club of Normal Handicap Calculation Process

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**Note:** It is recommended that clubs consult their *Member Association* if they feel action under Section 15 of this System may be appropriate.

### Introduction

- GA's principal objective in issuing handicaps is to provide all competitors in a net competition with an equal chance of achieving success. Net competitions by their nature should see a mix of all players enjoying various levels of success – specific players should not regularly perform at a level that is clearly superior to average net performance levels.
- The GA website provides expected performance standards for players of each level of handicap – [www.golf.org.au/handicapping-reports](http://www.golf.org.au/handicapping-reports).
- Should a club identify that one of its members is exhibiting regularity of performances in official net stroke play competitions (including Stableford and Par) or net match play competitions that are clearly superior (either in terms of wins, or in terms of other very good results) to the performances of a typical player, then GA will consider that the standard handicap system algorithms are failing to determine a handicap that meets the principal objective of the *GA Handicap System*. In such cases the club will be obliged by the *GA Handicap System* to review the player's *GA Handicap*.
- It is not reasonable to expect the *GA Handicap System* algorithms to produce equitable handicaps in 100% of cases. In less than 1% of cases nationwide, the *GA Handicap System* algorithms (for whatever reason) will produce a handicap for one player that is unfair either to the player or players they are competing against, or to the player themselves.
  - a. Where a club deems superior net performances to be the outcome of natural scoring patterns beyond what the *GA Handicap System* algorithms can reasonably be expected to accommodate, the courses of action the club should consider are a handicap 'Freeze' and/or a handicap adjustment.
  - b. Where a club deems that a member has demonstrated a degree of intent to manipulate the *GA Handicap System*, the first course of action the club should consider is to suspend the player's *GA Handicap* – for a first offence, this may be for a period of a month or less; any inappropriate scores in the player's GOLF Link record should be deleted or amended, and a handicap adjustment may also be warranted.
- The body of competitions being considered may comprise all club events; or it may be more limited to a specific type of competition, such as those that are significant to the culture of a club, or net events (sponsored or otherwise) conducted by National/State golf bodies and/or entities other than the club; and it may include only singles events, or only team events (such as four-ball or ambrose, etc), or a combination of singles and team events.
- A player's competition results will be reflective of a combination of factors such as their mental strength, practice/playing frequency, event preparation, course knowledge and 'expertise' in certain forms of play. The player's club is obliged to ensure that their *GA Handicap* is reasonably reflective of their competition results; or, should their club deem it appropriate, of their results in a specific type (or types) of competition.
- When weighing up the available relevant information, a club does not require an accumulation of information that is compelling to the point that it is virtually certain that the player's *GA Handicap* warrants refinement. The primary consideration for the club should be to determine a *GA Handicap* value that promotes equity for all other players. Once a *GA Handicap* has been amended, the club should closely monitor the player's ongoing performance and further refine the amendment (either up or down) if the club believes any further change is appropriate.

- Note: Where applicable, clubs should also be aware of Section 16 – ‘Manual Bonus Reduction for Exceptional Net Score’.

(i) **Outline**

(A) By using a *GA Handicap*, a player accepts that from time to time a club of which they are a member, a *Member Association*, or *GA* may adjust, freeze, or suspend that *GA Handicap*. Such adjustment may be other than in accordance with the formulas applied by this System. An adjustment may be a reduction or increase in a player's *GA Handicap*. Section 15 of this System may be implemented at any time. Any club of which a player is a member has equal authority to adjust, freeze, or suspend the relevant *GA Handicap*.

**(B) Reduction or Freezing of a GA Handicap**

Examples of scenarios which may warrant the reduction or freezing of a player's *GA Handicap* include but are not limited to:

- Where a player is showing better form than their *GA Handicap* or where a player is showing an increased interest in playing better golf but is not returning cards which lead to an automatic reduction in *GA Handicap* and the improvement, current ability, or some other justifiable circumstances make it apparent to the *Handicapping Authority* of any club of which the player is a member that the player is over-handicapped.
- Where following investigation of a player's performance, a player's returns give rise to suspicion they may be attempting to "manipulate a handicap", or are in serious breach of this System or the Rules of Golf or Etiquette (as contained in the Rules of Golf booklet).

Note: The second scenario may also in some instances provide reason for a club of which the player is a member, a *Member Association*, or *GA* to suspend the player's *GA Handicap*.

**(C) Suspension of a GA Handicap**

Should any club of which the player is a member, a *Member Association*, or *GA* be satisfied that a *GA Handicap* has not been determined in accordance with the *GA Handicap System* or that the player has acted in serious breach of this System or the Rules of Golf or otherwise detrimentally to the best interests of the game, it may suspend the *GA Handicap* for a stipulated period of time or for a stipulated minimum period of time.

**(D) Increasing a GA Handicap**

Although the primary calculation performed by this System in order to determine a *GA Handicap* is to average a player's current form, the basic premise of any handicap system is that a handicap should not be inconsistent with a player's underlying ability. (That underlying ability is considered to be reflected by the player's better performances. Although any player may lose form, it is not in the interests of equity for a *GA Handicap* to increase substantially due to such a loss of form.) Being mindful of this fundamental premise, *Handicapping Authorities* are encouraged to consider increasing the *GA Handicap* of a player whose circumstances reflect any of the following:

1. Where a player is in the process of experiencing, or recovering from, a significant long-term injury or illness.
2. Where a player has changed clubs and finds the new course to be far more challenging for them for whatever reason than the previous course.
3. Where a player has been *Capped* due to them reaching a *GA Handicap* that is clearly better than any other *GA Handicap* they have achieved for at least two years AND that the *Handicapping Authority* believes was clearly better than their underlying ability.
4. Where the *Handicapping Authority* firmly believes the player's *GA Handicap* for whatever reason is not commensurate with the player's underlying ability. (Note: *GA* encourages clubs to be especially sympathetic to the plight of a player who due to advancing age experiences a rapid deterioration of their underlying ability. It is recommended that a *Handicapping Authority* will move quickly to adjust a player's *GA Handicap* when it has clearly established that a player is in this situation.)

(E) There is nothing in Clause 15(i) of this System that allows action to be taken to reward or punish a player for a one-off score (but see Section 16). It is in the nature of golf performance that the scoring of some players is not consistent with normal distribution patterns, and also that a player will on occasion display extraordinary form.

(F) Where a club of which the player is a member puts this Section into effect, approval from the *Member Association* is not required. However, the club must provide notification in accordance with Clause (iv) of this Section.

**(ii) Decision to Freeze a Player's GA Handicap**

As stated in Section 15(i)(B), analysis of a *GA Handicap* may result in a decision to freeze it at a given figure.

- (A) A freeze may be effected for a stipulated period of either one month, two months, or three months only.
- (B) Upon the expiration of the initial freeze period, where the reason to freeze a *GA Handicap* continues to apply, the body that took the initial decision to freeze a *GA Handicap* may extend the freeze period.
- (C) The figure at which the handicap is frozen may not necessarily reflect the figure the normal calculation method would produce.
- (D) Where this System's normal *GA Handicap* calculation method determines a lower value than the freeze value, the normal *GA Handicap* calculation method will over-ride the freeze.

Note: If within the stipulated freeze period, this System's normal *GA Handicap* calculation method determines a higher value than the freeze value, the freeze will over-ride the normal *GA Handicap* calculation method.

- (E) A *Frozen GA Handicap* may still be used by a player in exactly the same fashion as a *Normal GA Handicap*.

(iii) A decision to adjust, freeze or suspend a *GA Handicap* under this Section must be ratified by the General Committee (Board of Directors) of the club which is taking such action. It is not a requirement that this ratification occur at a formal meeting. It may occur for example via email.

**(iv) Administration**

- (A) Notification of a decision to adjust, freeze, or suspend a *GA Handicap* under this Section must be forwarded by the club taking such action to the relevant *Member Association* (and, if the club taking such action is not the player's *Home Club*, the club taking such action must also immediately notify the player's *Home Club*). Such notification must include copies of the accumulated information on which the decision was based.
- (B) In all cases of decisions to adjust or suspend a player's *GA Handicap*, it is the *Home Club* that is responsible for making the adjustment to GOLF Link (or other handicap record system maintained by the *Home Club*).
- (C) In the event that it is not the *Home Club* that has made the decision to adjust or suspend a player's *GA Handicap*, the *Home Club* will be obligated to immediately adjust the player's GOLF Link record in accordance with the direction of the club that has made the decision. The *Home Club* may seek a review of the decision in accordance with Section 15(v), however any such review must not delay the amendment of the player's GOLF Link record to have it reflect the determination of the other club. Once such advice has been forwarded to the *Home Club*, any *Competition* committee must consider the figure contained in this advice to be the player's current *GA Handicap*.
- (D) Only *GA* will have physical access to the GOLF Link freezing functionality and to the GOLF Link suspension functionality (note: this does not alter the authority of any club of which the player is a member, or *Member Association*, or *GA* to take a decision to freeze or suspend a *GA Handicap*). The process to follow in order to effect the decision of a club to freeze or suspend a *GA Handicap* on GOLF Link is for the club to notify its *Member Association* of the decision to freeze (note: such notice must include stipulation of the figure at which the *GA Handicap* is to be frozen) or to suspend the *GA Handicap*; the *Member Association* will then notify *GA*. *GA* will only effect the decision of a club to freeze or to suspend a player's *GA Handicap* upon the receipt of a written request of a *Member Association*. Any *Competition* committee must consider a *GA Handicap* to be frozen or suspended upon the earlier of either:
  - it becoming aware that notification of the determining club's decision has been received by the *Member Association*, or
  - the player's GOLF Link handicap display being accordingly amended.

**(v) Review of Decisions**

- (A) Where a club of which the player is a member has made a decision to adjust, freeze or suspend a player's *GA Handicap*, the relevant *Member Association* or *GA*, on inquiry, may amend or reinstate the player's *GA Handicap*. Such inquiry may be requested in writing by the player to the *Member Association*, or it may be otherwise launched by the *Member Association* or *GA* if the *Member Association* or *GA* determines it is appropriate to do so.
- (B) Where a *Member Association* has reviewed a decision of a club to adjust, freeze or suspend a player's *GA Handicap*, *GA* may (if it considers it appropriate to do so) conduct its own inquiry with a view to giving consideration to amending or reinstating the player's *GA Handicap*. Such inquiry may be requested in writing by the player to *GA*, or it may be otherwise launched by *GA* if *GA* determines it is appropriate to do so.

- (C) A decision made by GA under section 15(v)(A) or 15(v)(B) is final and binding. There is no further right of appeal or review for the player, club or *Member Association*.
- (vi) It is entirely at the discretion of a committee in charge of a competition as to whether or not the determination of net results is made with reference to *Daily Handicaps*.
- (vii) GA does not seek to limit members of an Australian club to compete only in those net competitions the results of which are determined with reference to *Daily Handicaps*.
- (viii) A *GA Handicap* is GA's assessment of the relative golfing ability of a player. Players are not obliged to utilise this assessment. It shall always be the player's decision as to whether or not they make use of a *GA Handicap*.
- (ix) **Implementation Conditions**  
The following conditions are to assist clubs in implementing this Section and to provide uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf:
- (A) The General Committee (Board of Directors) must accumulate data and/or cards and/or scores and/or competition results that would indicate it is necessary to adjust, freeze, or suspend the player's *GA Handicap* in order to maintain uniformity in handicapping among all who play handicap golf.
- (B) The General Committee (Board of Directors) must as a body, make a decision to adjust, freeze, or suspend a *GA Handicap* as indicated by this Section of the *GA Handicap System*. It is not a requirement that this decision occur at a formal meeting. It may occur for example via email. Any decision should be recorded in writing (eg email, minutes of meeting etc).
- (C) No one person or group of persons at a club, other than the General Committee (Board of Directors) has the power to adjust, freeze, or suspend a *GA Handicap* when exercising a club's authority under this Section.
- (D) Appropriate letters for use by clubs wishing to implement this Section are available from *Member Associations*. The first letter advises the member that the *GA Handicap* is to be reviewed due to better than reflected, or otherwise, performances. The second letter advises of the newly-approved *GA Handicap*.

## 16. Manual Bonus Reduction for Exceptional Net Score

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- (i) Essential points of the Manual Bonus Reduction regulation are as follows:
- Some golfers have inconsistent scoring patterns such that their underlying ability is not typically reflected in their handicap. As these players operate outside normal patterns, regular handicap system regulations do not always cater for them.
  - These players will sometimes return Exceptional Net Scores that are reflective of their underlying ability but not of their handicap.
  - It is GA's position that a handicap system should not be designed around a small minority.
  - A handicap system should not penalise such players by unfairly limiting their capacity to achieve handicap reductions.
- (ii) Where such a player returns an Exceptional Net Score, their club should effect a Manual Bonus Reduction to their *GA Handicap*, unless there is clearly a good reason not to.
- (iii) An "Exceptional Net Score" is considered to be a score that produces a *Differential* (ie the value that is featured in the 'Sloped Played To' column on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au)) which is 6.5 or more better than the *GA Handicap* current at the time the round is played (or in a case where rounds have been played but not processed, the value at which the *GA Handicap* will be calculated once all previous rounds have been processed).
- (iv) Manual Bonus Reductions should not be effected in cases where the player's club considers the Exceptional Net Score to be clearly not reflective of the player's underlying ability, or where a Manual Bonus Reduction would see the player reduced to a *GA Handicap* that the player's club considers would be clearly inappropriate for the player.
- (v) A Manual Bonus Reduction should only be effected after the score itself has been processed through GOLF Link. The club should not effect a Manual Bonus Reduction if it considers that the normal calculation process has produced an appropriate reduction.
- (vi) Any club of which the player is a member may make a decision on a Manual Bonus Reduction.
- (vii) It is solely for the player's club to determine whether or not to effect a Manual Bonus Reduction. It is solely for the player's club to determine which official or committee is authorised to make decisions on Manual Bonus Reductions. The player's club has absolute authority in this regard. Clubs are not required to refer such decisions to the club General Committee or Board of Directors.

- (viii) GA considers that a player's club will have an adequate feel of the player's underlying ability in order to make an informed assessment as to whether or not a Manual Bonus Reduction would be inappropriate. A club should not effect a Manual Bonus Reduction on a player for whom it believes it does not have an adequate feel for their underlying ability.
- (ix) The following table must be used when effecting Manual Bonus Reductions:

Number of Strokes the <i>Differential</i> (ie the value featured in the 'Sloped Played To' column on <a href="http://www.golf.org.au">www.golf.org.au</a> ) is Better than the <i>GA Handicap</i> in effect when the round was played	Number of strokes the new <i>GA Handicap</i> (after the Manual Bonus Reduction has been performed) will be lower than the <i>GA Handicap</i> in effect when the round was played
6.5-9.4	2.0
9.5-11.4	3.0
11.5-13.4	4.0
13.5 or more	5.0

*Example:*

- A player (with a GA Handicap of 17.4) returns a net score that produces a Differential of 7.1 (note: the Differential is the value that is featured in the 'Sloped Played To' column on [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au)). This is 10.3 better than the player's GA Handicap.
- The club considers that the normal calculation process did not produce an appropriate reduction.
- The club considers that a Manual Bonus Reduction would be appropriate given its feel for the player's underlying ability.
- The player's GA Handicap is to be reduced so it will be 3.0 strokes less than the GA Handicap in effect when the round was played.
- The player's GA Handicap will be reduced to 14.4.

Note: The reduction to the player's GA Handicap should be achieved via the Handicap Adjustment function in GOLF Link (or the club's Tier 3 software system).

## **17. Allocation of Special Competition Handicap in Extraordinary Circumstances**

A committee in charge of a competition is authorised to allocate to a competitor (or group of competitors) a *Special Competition Handicap* if the following requirements are met:

- (i) The *Member Association* must first have been consulted to determine whether a general adjustment or otherwise of the player's GA Handicap is warranted.

Note: That the *Member Association* may have decided a general adjustment or otherwise of the player's GA Handicap is unwarranted does not prevent a committee in charge of a competition from allocating a *Special Competition Handicap*. A committee in charge of a competition will be eligible to allocate a *Special Competition Handicap* as soon as it has lodged in writing with the *Member Association* a submission or notice regarding re-assessment or otherwise of the player's GA Handicap. (Note: In this context, 'notice' may comprise for example a recommendation from the relevant competition committee to the *Member Association* for it to analyse the player's performances.)

- (ii) The committee in charge of the competition must accumulate a body of evidence (eg data, cards, scores, competition results) that would indicate the application of a *Special Competition Handicap* is necessary. The body of evidence need not be extensive but it must be compelling.

Note: It will be for the committee in charge of the competition to determine whether or not this requirement has been met.

- (iii) The *Special Competition Handicap* must reflect the accumulated body of evidence.

Note: It will be for the committee in charge of the competition to determine whether or not this requirement has been met.

Note i: Any committee in charge of a competition which allocates a *Special Competition Handicap* will be solely responsible for all associated outcomes.

Note ii: Neither GA, nor any *Member Association*, will be obliged to assist with any outcomes associated with the allocation of a specific *Special Competition Handicap*.

Note iii: When entering a score into a player's handicap record (or when processing a *competition* for handicap purposes), it is the *Special Competition Handicap* that should be used to calculate a net score. (In such a case, the *Special Competition Handicap* must be listed as the 'Played Off' handicap within the GOLF Link data entry process.)

Note iv: It is for the committee allocating a *Special Competition Handicap* to determine in which competitions the *Special Competition Handicap* will apply. A committee is not permitted to allocate to a player a *Special Competition Handicap* for a competition of which it does not have charge.

## 18. Handicap Information Disclosure

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No affiliated club, association or other affiliated or non-affiliated body may make handicaps or records of handicaps calculated under this System available outside the environs of its golf facility, clubhouse or office. This prohibits the unauthorised display of handicap information on the Internet and other forms of public media. For the purpose of viewing members' handicap information outside the club environs, the club, association or other body may, **with the express written consent of GA**, link its Internet site to [www.golf.org.au](http://www.golf.org.au), and/or other GOLF Link media facilities as advised from time to time.

## 19. Common Handicapping Scenarios – Procedures for Pro Shops & Handicapping Administrators

Note: Non-GOLF Link clubs should refer to Section 12(ix) for full details of the required GOLF Link score status options stipulated in the Handicapping Action column.

SCENARIO	COMPETITION ACTION	HANDICAPPING ACTION / GOLF Link SCORE STATUS
1. No <i>Daily Handicap</i> on card. <b>(i) STROKE</b> (Rule 6-2b) <b>(ii) PAR &amp; STABLEFORD</b> (Rule 6-2b & 32-2a)	<b>(i)</b> Disqualified from net event. <b>(ii)</b> As above. Note: If gross event is held, card accepted for gross.	<b>(i) &amp; (ii)</b> Apply correct handicap and use for handicapping. Choose the <b><i>“Non-Standard Entry”</i></b> option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s Stableford score (note: add 36 to the result for Par competitions; eg enter ‘34’ for -2, or enter ‘40’ for +4) into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank.
2. Card not signed (Rule 6-6b). Or card handed in after <i>competition</i> has closed.	Disqualified from the <i>competition</i> .	Use for handicapping as returned. Choose the <b><i>“Non-Standard Entry”</i></b> option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s Stableford score (note: add 36 to the result for Par competitions; eg enter ‘34’ for -2, or enter ‘40’ for +4) into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank.
3. Higher <i>Daily Handicap</i> on card which affects the number of strokes received. <b>(i) STROKE</b> (Rule 6-2b) <b>(ii) PAR &amp; STABLEFORD</b> (Rule 6-2b & 32-2a)	<b>(i)</b> Disqualified from net event. <b>(ii)</b> As above. Note: If gross event is held, card accepted for gross.	<b>(i) &amp; (ii)</b> Apply correct handicap and use for handicapping. Choose the <b><i>“Non-Standard Entry”</i></b> option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s Stableford score (note: add 36 to the result for Par competitions; eg enter ‘34’ for -2, or enter ‘40’ for +4) into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank.
4. Lower <i>Daily Handicap</i> on card in Stroke, Par or Stableford (Rule 6-2b & 32-2a).	Card accepted for <i>competition</i> as returned.	Where a net score is to be entered in the <i>Competition Score</i> box in GOLF Link, the value to enter is the score achieved with the inaccurate <i>Daily Handicap</i> . The <i>Handicapping Score</i> is the Stableford Score achieved with the inaccurate <i>Daily Handicap</i> . (Note: GOLF Link will then automatically calculate the correct <i>Differential</i> .) GOLF Link Score Status: <b><i>“Normal Score”</i></b> .
5. Higher score recorded on a hole than actually taken in Stroke, Par and Stableford (Rules 6-6d & 32-2a) which affects the player’s <i>Competition Score</i> .	Card accepted as returned.	Choose the <b><i>“Non-Standard Entry”</i></b> option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s actual Stableford score (note: add 36 to the result for Par competitions; eg enter ‘34’ for -2, or enter ‘40’ for +4) into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Enter the score as listed on the score card into the <i>Competition Score</i> box.
6. Score not listed on score card in Stroke for hole or holes which have been completed.	Disqualified from the <i>competition</i> .	<b>(A)</b> If the correct score/s can be readily identified (to a reasonable degree of certainty), it is to be used for handicapping. Choose the <b><i>“Non-Standard Entry”</i></b> option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s actual Stableford score into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank. <b>(B)</b> If correct score/s cannot be identified, the player is deemed to have had 2 points for each missing score. Choose the <b><i>“Non-Standard Entry”</i></b> option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s deemed Stableford score into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank.

SCENARIO	COMPETITION ACTION	HANDICAPPING ACTION / GOLF Link SCORE STATUS
7. Player fails to complete a hole/s they have commenced in Stroke (eg due to a lost ball, or failure to get out of a bunker).	Disqualified from the <i>competition</i> .	<u>Choose the “Non-Standard Entry” option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s Stableford score into the Handicapping Score box (they receive 0 points for the incomplete holes). Leave the Competition Score box blank.</u>
8. Lower score recorded than actually taken on a hole in Stroke (Rule 6-6d).	Disqualified from the <i>competition</i> .	<u>Choose the “Non-Standard Entry” option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s actual Stableford score into the Handicapping Score box. Leave the Competition Score box blank.</u>
9. Lower gross stroke score recorded on hole/s than actually taken in Par and Stableford. (Refer to Rule 32-2a and relevant Rules of Golf Decisions.)	<p>(i) If result of hole affected – Disqualified from the <i>competition</i>.</p> <p>(ii) If result of hole not affected, no penalty applies and card accepted for the <i>competition</i>.</p>	<p>(i) <u>Choose the “Non-Standard Entry” option in GOLF Link. Enter the player’s actual Stableford score (note: add 36 to the result for Par competitions; eg enter ‘34’ for -2, or enter ‘40’ for +4) into the Handicapping Score box. Enter the score as listed on the score card into the Competition Score box blank.</u></p> <p>(ii) Use for handicapping as returned. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: “Normal Score”.</u></p>
<p>10. Player fails to complete all holes in the round due to any of the following being considered by the club to be of reasonable significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Illness</li> <li>▫ Injury</li> <li>▫ Emergency</li> <li>▫ Bad weather (<i>Note: In this context, ‘bad weather’ does NOT generally need to be bad enough to force a suspension or cancellation of play. That some players may be willing to continue does not mean it is necessarily unreasonable in this context for others to stop. Clubs should be reasonably understanding in determining when weather is considered ‘bad’. It should be remembered that club golfers play the game as a recreation.</i>)</li> <li>▫ Other reason for stopping which is considered valid by the club.</li> </ul> <p><b>(i) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED LESS THAN 8 HOLES.</b></p> <p><b>(ii) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED 8 HOLES OR MORE.</b></p>	<p><b>(i) &amp; (ii)</b> The player’s result in a Stroke <i>competition</i> should be recorded as “Withdrawn”.</p> <p>In a Par or Stableford competition, this scenario in itself does not prevent a player from returning a legitimate score that is eligible to win a prize.</p>	<p>(i) Not used for handicapping. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: “No Score – Approved”.</u></p> <p>(ii) <b>(A)</b> In Stableford and Par, if the player’s incomplete score is identified and the player has returned a legitimate score card, the club’s GOLF Link administrator should enter this into GOLF Link as the player’s <i>Competition Score</i>. The <i>Handicapping Score</i> is determined in accordance with Section 10(vi) – ‘Scores Returned Over 8-17 Holes’. <u>Choose the “Non-Standard Entry” option in GOLF Link.</u></p> <p><b>(B)</b> In Stroke, <u>choose the “Non-Standard Entry” option in GOLF Link.</u> If the player’s incomplete score is identified, the club’s GOLF Link administrator should enter into GOLF Link the player’s <i>Handicapping Score</i> as a Stableford score which has been determined in accordance with Section 10(vi) – ‘Scores Returned Over 8-17 Holes’. The <i>Competition Score</i> entry box will be left blank.</p> <p><b>(C)</b> If the club does not, or can not, create an 18-hole score, the card is not used for handicapping. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: “No Score – Approved”.</u></p>



SCENARIO	COMPETITION ACTION	HANDICAPPING ACTION / GOLF Link SCORE STATUS
<p>11. Score for hole omitted in Par &amp; Stableford where hole has been played.</p>	<p>Card accepted as returned. (No obligation under the Rules of Golf to record a score for every hole in Par or Stableford.)</p>	<p>(A) If the player's complete score is identified, the club's GOLF Link administrator should enter into GOLF Link the player's incomplete <i>Competition Score</i>, as well as the score they actually had into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: "Non-Standard Entry".</u></p> <p>(B) If correct score/s cannot be identified, the club's GOLF Link administrator should enter into GOLF Link the player's incomplete <i>Competition Score</i> as well as their <i>Handicapping Score</i>. The <i>Handicapping Score</i> is determined in accordance with Section 10(vi) – 'Scores Returned Over 8-17 Holes'. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: "Non-Standard Entry".</u></p>
<p>12. When NOT APPROVED by the club:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Player fails to complete all holes in the round, or;</li> <li>◆ Card not returned.</li> </ul> <p><b>(i) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED LESS THAN 8 HOLES.</b></p> <p><b>(ii) PLAYER HAS COMPLETED 8 HOLES OR MORE.</b></p>	<p>Disqualified from the <i>competition</i>.</p> <p>(Exception: In a Par or Stableford competition, if the player returns a properly completed score card for the holes played, this scenario in itself does not prevent them from being eligible to win a prize.)</p>	<p><b>(i)</b> The round should be entered into GOLF Link with a <u>Score Status of: "No Score – Not Approved".</u></p> <p><b>(ii) (A)</b> If a disqualified player's incomplete score is identified, the club's GOLF Link administrator should enter into GOLF Link the player's <i>Handicapping Score</i> as their score for the round. The <i>Handicapping Score</i> is determined in accordance with Section 10(vi) – 'Scores Returned Over 8-17 Holes'. <u>Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank. GOLF Link Score Status: "Non-Standard Entry".</u></p> <p><b>(B)</b> In Stableford and Par, if the player's incomplete score is identified and the player has returned a legitimate score card, the club's GOLF Link administrator should enter into GOLF Link the player's <i>Handicapping Score</i> as a Stableford score which has been determined in accordance with Section 10(vi) – 'Scores Returned Over 8-17 Holes'. The player's actual score is entered into the <i>Competition Score</i> entry box. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: "Non-Standard Entry".</u></p> <p><b>(C)</b> If a complete 18-hole score is identified, it is used for handicapping as played. <u>Choose the "Non-Standard Entry" option in GOLF Link. Enter the player's Stableford score (note: add 36 to the result for Par competitions; eg enter '34' for -2, or enter '40' for +4) into the <i>Handicapping Score</i> box. Leave the <i>Competition Score</i> box blank.</u></p> <p><b>(D)</b> If the player's score is not identified, or if the <i>Handicapping Authority</i> decides not to apply the 'Scores Returned Over 8-17 Holes' regulation; <u>the round should be entered into GOLF Link with a Score Status of: "No Score – Not Approved".</u></p> <p><b>GENERAL NOTE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the vast majority of cases where a player has failed to return a score card or has failed to complete a round without good reason, it is because they have played poorly. As a result, it is equitable and accurate that the player be attributed a poor score by GOLF Link.</li> <li>• It is also the case that there exists a small minority of players who repeatedly fail to return score cards or who fail to complete rounds.</li> </ul>

SCENARIO	COMPETITION ACTION	HANDICAPPING ACTION / GOLF Link SCORE STATUS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A handicap will lose its full status in the event that a player should accrue in their most recent 20 <i>Actual Scores</i> (ie their list of <i>Live Scores</i>) five or more entries with a status of 'No Score – Not Approved'. Such a handicap will be known as a "<i>Provisional GA Handicap</i>".</li> <li>• <b>Clubs are able to access through GOLF Link a report listing the number of "No Score – Not Approved" entries each member has in their list of <i>Live Scores</i>. For assistance in accessing this report, ring the GOLF Link Customer Service Centre on 1300 650 750.</b></li> </ul>
<p>13. Player disqualified for a breach of the Rules that makes the estimation of a score, or the use of the round for handicapping purposes, to be inappropriate (eg use of non-conforming clubs, use of non-conforming balls, cheating).</p>	<p>Disqualified from the <i>competition</i>.</p>	<p>Not used for handicapping. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: "<i>Illegitimate Score</i>".</u></p>
<p>14. Player repeatedly fails to record hole-by-hole (or total) Stableford scores on their score card either in a Stableford <i>competition</i>, or for the purposes of complying with the SHA regulation in a Stroke <i>competition</i>.</p>	<p>No penalty in <i>competition</i> being played.</p> <p>(Note: While it is not permissible to penalise a player under the Rules of Golf for failing to record their hole-by-hole (or total) Stableford points on their score card, the Committee may, in order to assist club administrators, introduce a 'club regulation' to this effect and provide disciplinary sanctions (eg ineligibility to play in the next club <i>competition/s</i>).</p> <p>GA will support in writing clubs that apply such sanctions. It is fundamental to the culture of Australian golf that players assist their clubs by recording Stableford scores on score cards when required.)</p>	<p>Use for handicapping as returned. <u>GOLF Link Score Status: "<i>Normal Score</i>".</u></p>